

**Election '97**  
WOONG BASILDON MAN  
PLAY POLITICAL STRIP POKER PAGES 5-8



IN THE TABLOID:  
6 PAGES OF FILMS  
**A ROMEO & JULIET  
TO DIE FOR?**

INSIDE THE TABLOID  
20-PAGE PULL-OUT  
**EDUCATION+**

## Giving up! Pink faces all round

### I'll work with Labour, says Major's London organiser

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Steven Norris, the former minister of transport and chief election strategist in London for the Tories, has said that he is prepared to work with a Labour administration under Tony Blair.

Mr. Norris, who described Tony Blair as "a nice chap" if a little too "draconian", said: "If the present polls continue through to the election - and I am fighting to stop them - then Britain will wake up to a Labour government."

"With the advent of the next government it is important to remember that you have to offer the party in power - Conservative, as I hope, or Labour - new solutions," he said in an exclusive interview with *The Independent*.

Despite being famed for putting down his Labour peers at the despatch box, Mr Norris is quick to praise his opposite numbers. "I may disagree with Andrew Smith or Clare Short or friends like Keith Hill, Labour MP for Strathclyde who sits on the transport select committee, on certain issues that is politics - it does not go any further."

"Think on many social issues Labour has let people down. If there was a silver lining to a Labour government's cloud it would have been the lifting of the ban on gays in the military. However what happens with a bit of pressure - they retreat."

Mr Norris, who is leaving the Commons after the election, said: "I might disagree with Andrew Smith [the Labour front bench spokesman on transport] on whether fully-

**INSIDE**  
Labour's health spending pledge: Election countdown, pages 5, 6, 7 & (sorry) 8  
Race and the election, page 21

fledged privatisation or public private partnerships are the best way to improve the Tube. But I want what's best for the passenger and I will work for that."

He also admitted that bus

**It is difficult to justify intellectually what new Labour really stands for**

deregulation, championed by the Conservatives, has its "weaknesses". "The sheer volume of competition has let in too many cowboys," he said.

"Labour are in a more comfortable territory in seeking to smooth the edges of the 1986 act whereas many of my right-wing friends would be difficult to be persuaded of any curbs on bus operators."

The former minister was careful to say he is not supporting the Labour party.

"Vote for the social chapter, the minimum wage, the union bosses - that is New Labour. The electorate have to remember what this is really about," he says.

"The problem for New Labour is that it is very difficult to justify intellectually what they really stand for," he added.

The MP for Epping Forest is no stranger to controversy. Only last week he got into hot water he said that protesters were right to oppose the Newbury bypass, adding for good measure that he opposed the chosen route.

He is also considered the most able Commons performer never to have made it to the cabinet table and is well-liked and respected by members of all political parties.

Although "left of the mainstream" Conservative party on many social issues, Mr Norris remains a committed right-winger on economics and an political admirer of Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence.

His own career stalled when it was revealed that he had wooed five mistresses as well as a wife.

But he is credited by many observers for moving the department of transport from staunch support for road building to a more green position - now adopted by all the political parties.

Mr Norris will enter the private sector after this election as the head of the Road Haulage Association - the trade body for lorry fleet owners. His ability also drew a bus company to offer him a £10,000 to work as a non-executive director.



Steven Norris: Solutions for the party in power

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

### Tim Smith does the decent thing

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

One festering boil in the Tory party was lanced yesterday with the resignation of Tim Smith as Conservative candidate for Beaconsfield, but another remained as Neil Hamilton steadfastly refused to follow suit.

Mr Smith, who has admitted receiving up to £25,000 in cash from Harrods' owner Mohamed Al Fayed for asking Parliamentary questions, stood on the doorstep of the home of the chairman of his Conservative association and announced he was retiring from politics.

He blamed the leak of his evidence to the cash-for-questions inquiry, being held by Sir Gordon Downey. It "has made my course of action inevitable with its complete disregard for both Parliamentary privilege and natural justice", he said. However, he gave no explanation about his relationship with Mr Al Fayed and made no apology.

Mr Smith said his actions were only ever prompted by "my best judgement of where the interests of the country and my constituents lay".

While many prominent Beaconsfield Tories had stood by Mr Smith, support appeared to be crumbling, which may have prompted his departure.

The former constituency vice-chairwoman, Caroline Stratford, said: "Beaconsfield is the third safest Conservative seat in the country and the 30,000 or more Conservative electors who last voted for Tim Smith have to be really confident that they have the best Member of Parliament." She said she felt local people were

"disappointed" with Mr Smith. Mr Hamilton, however, shows no sign of bowing to the pressure. His constituency chairman, Alan Barnes, said of Mr Smith's departure: "The two cases are totally different. Mr Smith admitted from the beginning he had accepted money. Neil Hamilton has consistently denied accepting cash for questions."

However, evidence to the Downey inquiry shows that Mr Hamilton accepted "secret commissions", worth £10,000, from lobbyist Ian Greer, and that he now accepts he lied to Michael Heseltine about having a "financial relationship" with Mr Greer.

John Major refused to make any comment about Mr Smith's departure but Conservative Central Office stood by him: "Obviously we are sad to see him go. I think he has acted with good grace and dignity."

It is possible that the party put him under pressure to go in order to help defuse the scandal. Mr Smith spoke to Central Office yesterday because he believed the "scandal" against him was damaging to the party.

According to Central Office sources, the Prime Minister "sympathises" with Mr Smith and only two weeks ago he was at a dinner at 10 Downing Street hosted by Mr Major for a group of Saudi Arabians.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, said: "All those MPs who have admitted taking cash for questions and are guilty of services rendered without declaring them are not fit to be Parliamentary candidates... and John Major should show leadership for once in asking all of them to stand down."

## IRA bombs its way into the election

As the IRA presses the firing-bombs of bombs in the north of England, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness press the flesh, seeking election in West Belfast and Mid-Ulster.

There is an election on: but in republican terms there is also a war on. If the IRA can manage it, there will be more incidents in both England and Northern Ireland, if only to send the message that it remains dangerous.

Yesterday's two early-morning bombings near Wilmshurst railway station injured no one, but they were clearly intended to signal that the IRA has not gone away, and that people may be killed in the course of this election campaign.

In the old days, incidents like these were supposed, in republican fantasy, to have the cumu-



DAVID McKITTRICK

lative effect of driving the British out of Ireland. Today, the sights have been lowered considerably, for few if any republicans believe they are heading for victory. Instead, the bombs are seen as positioning mechanisms, aimed at placing the republican movement in the strongest and most advantageous position for a new negotiation with the next government.

Some senior republicans be-

lieve they should have by now adopted an unarmed strategy, but the prevailing view among IRA leaders differs from this. Those running the show believe in using a combination of military and political activity; hence the blend of ballot-box and bomb.

Those who want to move as quickly as possible to another ceasefire are acquiescing in this approach. They may disagree with it, but they consider themselves bound by the republican responsibility of collective cabinet responsibility. The alternative is a public split.

Yet at a deeper level, the two tendencies agree on one fundamental - for both believe it will all end, sooner or later, not in victory but at a conference table. The disagreement is not on whether to arrive there but on

how and when, and on how to secure the best negotiating position. The next British government will, most likely on its first day in office, receive advances from the republicans holding out the prospect of a renewed ceasefire in exchange for guaranteed and speedy entry into talks.

Sinn Féin will say there should be no lengthy "decontamination" period and no preconditions about advance decommissioning of weaponry. It will also ask for a time-frame for negotiations, together with movement on ancillary but important issues such as prisoners.

Most republicans assume that another ceasefire will probably come into being sometime within the next 12 months, after much arguing around those points. But there will be many

hurdles. A new government with a slender majority, whether Labour or Tory, may be anxious to court Unionist MPs, who will certainly campaign strongly against the idea of doing business with republicans. Then there is the loyalist marching season: another disastrous summer could sour the atmosphere completely.

All that will come after the election, but for the moment things are not going entirely to the republican plan, since if the IRA had its way the political-mix would contain much more violence than at present. Its problem has been that the security forces in both Britain and Belfast have in the past year had an unprecedentedly high success rate in foiling IRA operations and arresting important

members of the organisation. Will yesterday's attacks represent a one-off? Not if the IRA can help it. If there are no more attacks it will be due to the efforts of the security forces, for the IRA will be trying hard to put itself in the forefront of this election campaign.

On the electoral front, things look reasonably promising for the republicans. Sinn Féin holds no seats at the moment, but Messrs Adams and McGuinness are favourites to win West Belfast and Mid-Ulster. They are trying hard to win seats while the IRA tries hard to bomb Britain, in order to give the next government the unmistakable message that republicans continue to wield too much political and paramilitary muscle to be ignored.

### QUICKLY

**Nazi art find**  
Crucial new information about art works seized and sold by the Nazis because they were "degenerate" has been found in a routine bequest of German books and catalogues left to the Victoria and Albert Museum by a London art dealer. Page 3

**Middlesbrough blocked**  
Middlesbrough learned yesterday that they have the manager of the month, the player of the month, but not the legal argument to win the day. An FA appeal heard threw out their protest against the three-point penalty imposed after they failed to fulfil their fixture with Blackburn. Page 32

## Banking system goes cashless for Easter

John Willcock

If you are expecting your pay-cheque to appear in your bank account today, be warned - you may suffer a cashless Easter weekend. The automated payments system which connects companies to banks broke down on Tuesday, leaving an "unknown" number of payments that did not get through. Banks were told of the breakdown around midnight on Tuesday and spent yesterday alerting branches to the problem. The computer staff who run

the payments system were scratching their heads yesterday, with no clear idea of what caused the network to seize up or how many customers will be barred from their cash.

The fear, engulfing high-street banks is that solvent customers will use their cashpoint cards today to prepare for the Bank Holiday weekend, only to be given the electronic equivalent of the bum's rush: "Refer to card issuer."

Even worse, branch managers may mistakenly bounce cheques on accounts which

have gone into the red simply because of the computer glitch. Rightly fearful of customer fury, the banks have instructed branch managers that some cheques which should be bounced today should remain firmly desk-bound until next Tuesday. Customers with wages due should be able to draw money provided they take along their passbook and identification to their local branch.

The problem occurred in the BACS payments system, an electronic clearing house for all UK banks run by the Associa-

tion for Payment Clearing Services. A spokesman said: "As soon as we saw that there would be a problem with people's wages and salaries we decided to come clean and warn people. We'll bear any charges if people go overdraw because of it. It's our problem."

The problem affected an unknown number of companies connected to BACS. "The system began to run at a slow speed, and (payment) messages weren't getting through. So we shut it off, and then ran it an extra seven hours last night."



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## news

## significant shorts

## Council issues warning over convicted paedophile

More than 8,000 parents have been warned by their local council to protect their children from a "very dangerous" convicted paedophile who has moved into an area of south-east London. The case comes just days after legislation forcing paedophiles and other sex offenders to register their addresses and any change of name to police became law.

The law, which will not be enacted until after the election, gives police the discretion to pass on information about sex offenders to other organisations in the community, such as councils.

As a result of legal advice, the letter from Lewisham Council does not name the 44-year-old man or give his address. But it gives a clear description of him and publishes a hotline number which parents can call if they are worried.

Clare Garner

## Poor advice for Welsh pupils

Welsh school leavers are outclassed by their English counterparts, according to a Welsh Affairs Select Committee report published yesterday.

It found that competition between Wales' Training and Education Councils, local education authorities and the Further Education Funding Council was unhelpful to students planning their working life. Conflicting advice by the careers service added to the confusion and research into the role of advisers was identified in the report as a priority, it concluded.

The remoteness of further education colleges' governors was another stumbling block.

Tony Heath

## First solicitors join silks

Two practising solicitors were included for the first time in the new Queen's Counsel announced yesterday, breaking the stranglehold of barristers on the appointments as "silks". The two are Arthur Marriott, 53, a partner at Wilmer Cutler and Pickering and a specialist in commercial arbitration, and Dr Lawrence Collins, 55, a partner at Herbert Smith and a specialist in commercial and intellectual property law.

Patricia Wynn Davies

## Famous show their spirituality



Channel 5 yesterday dished up its religious deserts and *Songs of Praise* it ain't. *My Sunday*, a weekly morning slot which joins celebrities in their homes, claims to unmask the spiritual side of the rich and famous. Included in the line-up are some surprising figures such as Max Clifford, the king of public relations, and Toyah Wilcox (pictured), the "80s Princess of Punk".

Another series, *Alpha Zone*, a contemporary Christian music magazine programme, presents a "scene" never before shown on British television and "take the vibe beyond the parameters of a Christian audience".

Clare Garner

## 73 years for tycoon kidnap gang

A gang who kidnaped a wealthy shipping tycoon and held him prisoner for nine days in a cupboard to demand a £5m ransom were yesterday jailed for a total of 73 years at the Old Bailey.

Their "evil and dangerous" Greek ringleader, Constantine Korkolis, 40, was sentenced to 25 years by Judge Simon Goldstein after a jury returned guilty verdicts on four defendants.

Two Frenchmen, Jean-Marc Mereu, 37, and Djemel Moussaoui, 34, and a second Greek, Thanassis Zografos, 25, were each sentenced to 16 years imprisonment.

All four had denied kidnapping and falsely imprisoning George Franghitas, 43, in London last year.

## Stately setting for 'Emmerdale'

A new village for the television soap *Emmerdale* is to be built on a famous country estate. Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television yesterday won approval to build the village film set in the grounds of Harewood House, near Leeds, home of Lord Harewood, a cousin of the Queen.

The new set will be used to film outdoor scenes of the programme. The television company has agreed to contribute £50,000 a year to a conservation fund for the estate.

## Remains aid modern human theory

Human remains between 270,000 and 300,000 years old found in Kenya add weight to theories that our ancestors looked and acted like modern humans much sooner than anthropologists had thought, according to research published today.

An international team say that an ancient skull with all its top teeth, and a thigh bone found near Lake Turkana were both from an almost modern human.

"These hominids might represent the oldest near-modern human specimens from anywhere in the world," the team writes in the science journal *Nature*.

It has previously been thought that modern humans, *Homo Sapiens*, emerged about 40,000 years ago. Archaic *Homo Sapiens* were believed to have emerged 90,000 years ago.

Charles Arthur

## Zoran Tancic

It was announced in the High Court yesterday that businessman Zoran Tancic had accepted damages for libel from *The Independent* over allegations that money he had donated to the Conservative Party was "tainted".

His solicitor, Mr Andrew Stephenson, told the Court that Mr Tancic, who was born in Belgrade, had no links with Radovan Karadzic or the Bosnian Serb Leadership as had been made clear in an earlier article published in *The Independent* and that it was wrong to condemn Mr Tancic for his association with a Russian said to have been at the centre of a corruption scandal, but against whom no charges had ever been brought.

## people



WALKING THE BOARDS: The Hollywood actress Kathleen Turner in London yesterday to launch the Chichester Theatre Festival where she will make her first appearance on a British stage. The star of *Body Heat* and *War of the Roses*, who can command £500,000 per film, will work for just £500 a week in Somerset Maugham's *Our Betters* (Photograph: Tony Buckingham)

## Final blow as King's Cross victim is left with huge bill

His face is a mask of scar tissue, his hands are so severely burnt that he can no longer play the guitar and keyboards, and his voice is too damaged to sing. He is laughed at wherever he goes.

But for Kwasi Afari Minta, the Ghanaian musician who was caught in the King's Cross fire, the suffering does not end. On top of everything, he learnt yesterday that he now faces a legal bill approaching £150,000.

Mr Minta, the most severely injured survivor of the disaster a decade ago, was awarded just £110,427 damages by a High Court judge after an eight-day hearing. Since he turned down the £350,000 settlement offered by London Underground because it was "simply not enough", he must now pay the company's lawyers fees.

Speaking after the ruling by Mr Justice Toulson, Mr Minta, 43, who had submitted a claim for £1m plus damages, said: "I am very disappointed. I have come out of this with nothing after all the suffering."

Patricia Dryden, head of litigation for London Trans-

port, said they had already made payments of £100,500 to Mr Minta and had tried to settle the action.

"Our last settlement offer of £355,000 was deemed so sufficient by the Legal Aid Board that, because Mr Minta did not accept it, they withdrew legal aid a few days before the case was due to come to court, which meant he had no legal representation at court."

During the hearing earlier this month, Mr Minta, who lives with his wife, a south-west Londoner, and is married with a five-year-old autistic son, admitted he was an illegal immigrant who should not have been in Britain at the time of the tragedy. He was given only a one-month visitor's visa when he arrived in the UK in 1985. He told Mr Justice Toulson that when he arrived he had not realised he needed a visa.

The giant fireball which exploded at King's Cross in November 1987 killed 31 people. A total of £4.5m has been paid out to 110 people making claims for death, injury and property damages.

Clare Garner

## Mackay rebukes niggers judge

A judge who used the expression "work like niggers" was yesterday formally rebuked by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, for giving offence to ethnic minorities.

He told Judge William Crawford QC, who said in a case "I know many people... who work like niggers", that such remarks did "wholly disproportionate damage to the perception of justice and the reputation of the judiciary."

For Judge Crawford, 60, who is married with three children, it was a second offence. He was reprimanded five years ago for kissing a court usher during an incident in his chambers at Newcastle Crown Court.

Lord Mackay reminded him that he had sent a letter to all full-time judges in 1994 making clear that behaviour causing offence, particularly on racial or religious grounds, or amounting to sexual harassment, was unacceptable.

Judge Crawford has apologised for the remark, saying it was a "regrettable slip" not intended to offend. "I trust you now recognise," Lord Mackay told him, "that use of such expressions is likely to give offence and did, in fact, give offence."

Clare Garner

## Steffi cleared as court orders charity gift

Steffi Graf has been ordered to make a donation to charity after prosecutors dropped their investigation into her tax affairs.

The amount the German tennis star will give was not disclosed in the one-line statement issued by court officials in the southern city of Mannheim yesterday. The deal was reached with her agreement and is a technique commonly used in Germany when officials feel a case does not merit a lengthy hearing.

Graf's father, Peter, was convicted in January of evading millions of Marks in taxes on his daughter's winnings and sentenced to nearly four years in prison.

The judge recommended dropping the investigation into Steffi, saying he believed her father bore responsibility. She has always claimed she had entrusted financial matters to her father.

Clare Garner

## Parents pray for Cambodia hostage

The parents of Christopher Howes, the British mines clearance expert who was seized by Khmer Rouge bandits a year ago, attended a midday service at their parish church yesterday to mark the first anniversary of their son's disappearance.

Roy Howes, 69, a retired businessman, and his wife, Betty, 70, lit a candle in their home in Backwell, near Bristol, at 7pm last night, and prayed for the 37-year-old Falklands veteran, who was captured as he led a mine-clearance operation in northern Cambodia. They requested that the nation should do the same.

"We are hoping that thousands of others will join us and pray for Chris," said Mr Howes. "If enough people are thinking of him and he is still alive perhaps the message will somehow find its way around to him."

Since Mr Howes' disappearance there has been no hard evidence that Mr Howes or his interpreter are alive.

Clare Garner

## briefing

## ENVIRONMENT

## Wheely bins steer towards more waste, says survey

Big wheely bins encourage people to throw away more waste and recycle less, research by the Government's Environment Agency has suggested.

The agency used three consultancies and three universities to probe the garbage from 1,400 homes up and down the country, hand-sorting their rubbish to study its detailed composition. The preliminary results were released yesterday. The researchers found that households with wheely bins produced, on average, 978kg of waste a year, while those using plastic bin bags or traditional dustbins produced 645kg.

"If you give people a big enough bin you discourage them from recycling and encourage them to put in bulky items," said Terry Coleman, the agency's waste strategy manager. More and more homes are being issued with the wheely bins because they make collection quicker and more convenient for the binmen - who are increasingly contract rather than council staff. Some 18 per cent of the rubbish by weight consists of packaging materials like glass, cardboard and plastic. The nation's households throw away 3.2 million tonnes of waste packaging a year.

Nicholas Schoon

## MOTORING

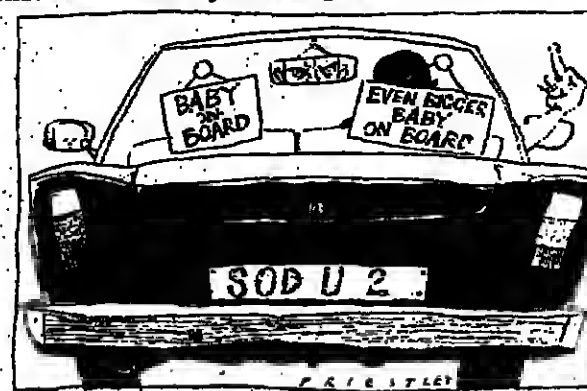
## The road-rage children

Parents are raising a generation of road-ragers by setting a bad example in front of their children, a survey claimed yesterday.

Nearly three-quarters of children said their parents get angry while driving and more than half said mothers and fathers shout and swear at other motorists. A psychologist, Don MacLeod, said: "Parents are effectively creating a new generation of aggressive drivers because of their own bad habits."

The Autoglass survey of youngsters aged 10-16 found that nearly two in three fathers (62 per cent) get angry while driving and more than half (52 per cent) shout and swear; 55 per cent of mothers get angry and 34 per cent swear; fathers are three times more likely to speed than mothers.

The research also showed drivers were most likely to have accidents on a Saturday between 4pm and 6pm.



## MEDICINE

## Breakthrough for diabetics

A revolutionary way of taking medicines could allow diabetics to throw away their needles, scientists disclosed yesterday.

The method involves swallowing plastic "microspheres" - less than 10,000th of a millimetre across - containing minute droplets of the drugs, including DNA and insulin.

The biologically degradable capsules stick to the walls of the small intestine and pass through them, between the cells, to deliver the medicine into the bloodstream.

Scientists in the United States have been testing the technique on rats, with encouraging results. They wrote in the journal *Nature* that if the system can be transferred to humans it could allow delicate drugs normally damaged by the digestive system to be passed quickly from the mouth to the blood circulation.

## EDUCATION

## Bullies should be beaten

Most adults believe school bullies should suffer corporal punishment, according to a survey of school safety.

More than half the adults questioned (55 per cent) said they thought corporal punishment should be brought back for children who annoyed others - while 74 per cent said bullies should be expelled; 53 per cent believed the police should be called in to deal with cases of bullying.

The findings of the poll, in which NOP interviewed 1,000 adults for *She* magazine, come after it emerged that the schoolgirl killer Sharon Carr had also knifed a 13-year-old in her school toilets, and just over a year after the Dunblane massacre. In the wake of this, the poll found almost half wanted closed-circuit television to be installed in schools.

Some eight out of 10 felt schools were less safe than they used to be, with a similar number believing police should regularly advise on security. Almost 90 per cent felt teachers were inadequately prepared to cope with any threats.

## SCIENCE

## Probe heads for Saturn moon

Europe and the United States aim to explore the largest moon on Saturn using a probe which will take off in October. The probe, named Huygens, will land on Titan in 2004 after a seven-year journey, and send back information about the moon's physical and chemical composition.

Named after the Dutch astronomer who discovered Titan in 1655, Huygens was built by a team of 13 European companies led by Aerospatiale of France, together with NASA. It weighs 300kg and will be launched aboard a US Titan IV Centaur rocket. It will then use the "slingshot" effect of the gravity of Earth, then Venus and finally Jupiter to approach Saturn before making a parachute landing on Titan, whose chemistry and geology appears to have similarities to those of the Earth in its primitive stage.

Huygens will also carry thousands of messages sent in by Internet users, ranging from calls for galactic peace to invitations to share a plate of pasta.

Charles Arthur

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# Reviled art that made the Nazis rich

Revealed for the first time: the complete account of masterpieces plundered during the Hitler era

David Lister  
Arts News Editor

Crucial new information about art works seized and sold by the Nazis because they were "degenerate" has been found in a routine bequest of German books and catalogues left to the Victoria and Albert Museum by a London art dealer.

The discovery is being hailed by experts in Germany as the first complete record of Hitler's raiding of museums and galleries for paintings and sculptures the Nazis deemed subversive and obscene. Many were simply modernist or abstract pictures. Others were by Jewish artists.

The Independent is the only newspaper to have seen the typescripts now being examined by V&A specialists. They contain lists of "degenerate" artists, including Van Gogh, the titles of their confiscated works and prices they were sold for—often to Swiss art dealers.

But not always. Three entries list Van Gogh paintings and in the column for the buyer's name, it says simply "Reichsm. Goering", the official title of Hermann Goering, Hitler's lieutenant and the head of the Luftwaffe. He is listed as having paid 150,000 Reichsmarks for one Van Gogh to a Berlin gallery, though there is no evidence that the money was ever received. One of these works is Dr Gachet, one of a series of paintings by Van Gogh with the same title.

Goering, who clearly did not mind owning degenerate works by Old Masters, is also down as having bought an oil painting by Gauguin, *Reiter Am Strand*.

A Van Gogh self-portrait was sold for 175,000 Swiss francs to a Swiss art dealer, and four prints by Lovis Corinth were sold to a Swiss art dealer for exactly one Swiss franc—such was the Nazi contempt for many of the works.



Looted: Hermann Goering (left) with Van Gogh's 'Portrait of Dr Gachet' and (top to bottom right) Lovis Corinth's 'Still life with flowers', Edouard Munch's 'Bergierde' and George Grosz's 'Photomontage'. The Victoria and Albert Museum has uncovered a full archive of the stolen masterpieces

Because of the new information contained in these documents, historians will now know of several thousand more works confiscated by the Nazis. The new complete set of artists and works lists 18,000 paintings and sculptures. Only 12,000 had been officially collated in public archives before.

Most crucially, these newly discovered documents detail which paintings were destroyed and which were sold.

A number of paintings by Munch are listed as having been confiscated and sold. So are 10 works by Georg Grosz, the subject of a London exhibition at present. But numerous photographs by Man Ray, one of the greatest photographers of the 20th century, are marked X, meaning destroyed. One of these was inoffensively titled *Pistols And Keys*.

Compiled by the Nazi ministry of propaganda the type-

scripts contain handwritten notes stating whether the paintings should be sold or destroyed, which dealers they were sold to and what prices they fetched. The prices are staggeringly low. A number of works by Munch were sold for less than 10 Swiss francs.

The discovery will cause excitement not only among art historians but among historians of the Third Reich. Andreas Huneke, an art historian in

Potsdam who has specialised in this area, said yesterday: "Now we can see the glorious names of the artists and the names of their works. And we can see which of the works were destroyed. It is very important." It is well-known that the Nazis seized artworks they thought degenerate and put on a special exhibition of them in 1937—an exhibition they quickly had to close because it proved so popular.

Copies of the first volume, detailing the places where works were confiscated alphabetically from Aachen to Griefswald, are held in archives in Berlin and Potsdam. But the second, H-Z, volume listing thousands of other seizures had been thought lost for decades.

It has now been discovered among books in a bequest left by Austrian-born London art dealer, Harry Fischer, in 1977. The bequest, containing the

first complete record of the number of works the Nazis had removed from German museums, was handed to the V&A by his widow, unaware of what it contained.

Susanna Robson, assistant curator in Special Collections, said: "What is so exciting about this is that it is complete. It appears to be the only complete inventory in existence."

"There have been people in Germany specifically working

on trying to find out what happened to this document. We will be making it available for their study."

Mr Fischer was born in Vienna in 1905 to Jewish middle class parents. In 1938 he fled to England, where he served in the British Army's Pioneer Corps during the Second World War. In 1940 he founded the Marlborough Art Gallery in London, and in 1971 opened his own gallery, Fischer Fine Art.

## Flicker of hope from brain damage victim astonishes doctors

Annabel Ferriman

Doctors yesterday called for more medical details on the case of a man who has made a partial recovery after spending five years in a vegetative state.

The Royal College of Physicians said that it would welcome any clinical information with a bearing on the guidelines surrounding the condition, which is usually thought to be irreversible after a year.

The doctors and parents of 30-year-old Hillsborough victim Andrew Devine, from Allerton, near Liverpool, confirmed that five years after the football disaster, he had recovered sufficiently to communicate simple ideas.

The case is significant because doctors have never before recorded a case in which anyone regained the ability to communicate after more than three years in such a condition. Medical guidelines say that doctors can apply to a court to have a patient's food and hydration withdrawn after 12 months.

Mr Devine's parents, Stanley and Hilary, speaking through their solicitor, Robin Makin, yesterday said: "Andrew began to emerge from the vegetative state about five years after his diagnosis [in 1989] and has continued to improve in his ability to communicate at a simple level, using a touch-sensitive buzzer switch developed by the Royal Hospital [for Neurodisability in south London]."

"His ability to recover further is unknown. Andrew's condition is of the utmost seriousness and he needs constant attention. Andrew has a civil claim against the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police, in respect of which judgment has been obtained but damages have still to be assessed and no further information can be given in respect to this matter."

"A proper care regime, including substantial physiotherapy, has been involved to ensure that Andrew has the best care reasonably available."



Mr Makin, of the solicitor E Rex Makin and Company, from Liverpool, added that his parents had given Andrew devoted love and care.

Dr Keith Andrews, director of medical and research services at the Royal Hospital for Neurodisability, where Mr Devine has been regularly assessed and treated, said yesterday that although his improvement had been limited, he had been able to communicate a few simple ideas. "We recognised back in 1994 that there were signs that he was becoming aware. It was only last year, that we got him

"To emerge from a PVS after five years as Andrew has done is pretty remarkable. The longest time has been three years"

communicating consistently."

He was able to reply to questions by pressing the buzzer once for yes and twice for no. "He expressed which football team he supported. One of our therapists asked him: 'Is Manchester the best football team in the country?' He answered no. The same happened when she asked about Everton. But when she asked: 'Is Liverpool the best team?' Andrew answered yes."

"When we first told Andrew's carers that we thought he was responding, they were not

convinced at first. We were only able to prove that he could because of our expertise and technology," he said.

Dr Andrews, who caused a furor last summer when he showed that some cases of persistent vegetative state (17 out of 40 in his study) had been wrongly diagnosed and that several patients who had thought to be vegetative could actually communicate, believes that Mr Devine's state is due to a genuine improvement, not to an original misdiagnosis. There are thought to be between 1,000 and 1,500 people in a PVS in Britain.

"For someone to emerge from a PVS after five years as Andrew has done is pretty remarkable. We have treated a large number of people, who have not come out of such states even after a long time. The longest time after which anyone has ever emerged from a vegetative state before has been three years. It is rare to emerge from such a state after a year," he said.

"You cannot make decisions on such rare cases. If it occurs only once in 10,000 cases, you have got to give some consideration to the other 9,999 cases. Are you respecting them by continuing to do absolutely everything for them, such as putting up drips and so on, just because one person has managed to emerge?"

A spokesperson for the Royal College of Physicians, which last year issued guidelines telling doctors how to recognise PVS, said: "The college would welcome any new clinical information being sent to them, which has a bearing on the guidelines."

The parents of Tony Bland, the Hillsborough victim whose family won the right from the House of Lords to withdraw his life support in 1993, said yesterday that the development in the Devine case did not affect the case of their son, who had a particularly severe case of PVS, and they had "no regrets".

### States of unconsciousness

**Vegetative state**  
No awareness of self or environment; eyes open and shut, as though awake and asleep; can breathe normally; most have to be fed through a tube.

**Coma**  
No verbal responses; cannot be roused; does not obey commands or open eyes either spontaneously or to any stimulus; must be fed through a tube. Can regain consciousness after many months.

**Locked-in syndrome**  
Patient is conscious and aware of surroundings, but is totally paralysed, and can usually only respond by eye movements.

**Brain-stem death**  
Damage to the brain is irreversible. Patient is unconscious and unable to breathe without a ventilator.

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return of the bombers

# IRA back in fray with trackside explosions

The IRA's long-fered election bombing campaign began yesterday with a bizarre coded warning to an elderly woman apparently chosen at random.

The two explosions which followed at Wilmslow in Cheshire caused serious disruption to railway traffic in the North-west. Two firefighters investigating the first device were just 300 yards away when the second went off, rocking the town. Debris from a signal relay box damaged in the incident was scattered across 100 yards

of the railway embankment and a new road bypass.

Ian Moody, Cheshire's assistant chief constable, said the explosions "bore all the hallmarks of the IRA", and John Major condemned the attack as a "two-fingered assault on democracy".

The IRA said yesterday it remained committed to bringing what it called the British government's undemocratic rule of Northern Ireland to an end once and for all. In a headline Easter message, IRA leaders

said they stood "ready to face their responsibilities in facilitating a process aimed at securing a lasting resolution to the conflict between the British government and the Irish people".

John Grieve, the head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch who joined the Wilmslow investigation, asked all members of the public to be vigilant and appeals for businesses to keep any closed-circuit television tapes for inspection. "All our successes in recent years have been driven by

help from the public," he said.

Asked whether the bombers' intention was economic sabotage or to kill, he said: "All terrorist devices threaten human life, that's what their purpose is. [But] there are economic elements to the way terrorists behave."

The first indication of the attack came in a telephone call to a private address in Wilmslow at 5.30am which warned of a bomb left at the town's police station. Police were alerted and were evacuating both their sta-

tion and neighbouring homes, when another call to a Manchester hospital raised the possibility that another type of station was intended.

As officers extended the alert, a bomb went off at 6.30am on railway tracks 40 yards from Wilmslow station platform and not far from a leisure centre to which more than 80 people had been taken for safety.

Paul Gozem, one of those moved, said: "What the police had in fact done was take us a damn sight closer to the bomb."

The evacuees were moved again before the second blast 35 minutes later. But households next door to the railway station knew nothing until they were woken by the blast.

Karen Lindsay, 44, who lives opposite, said: "It was this explosion which you knew wasn't a normal noise. It shook the house." Near-neighbour Denise Moore, 37, added: "I was quite surprised that we weren't evacuated. I guess they didn't really know what was going on."

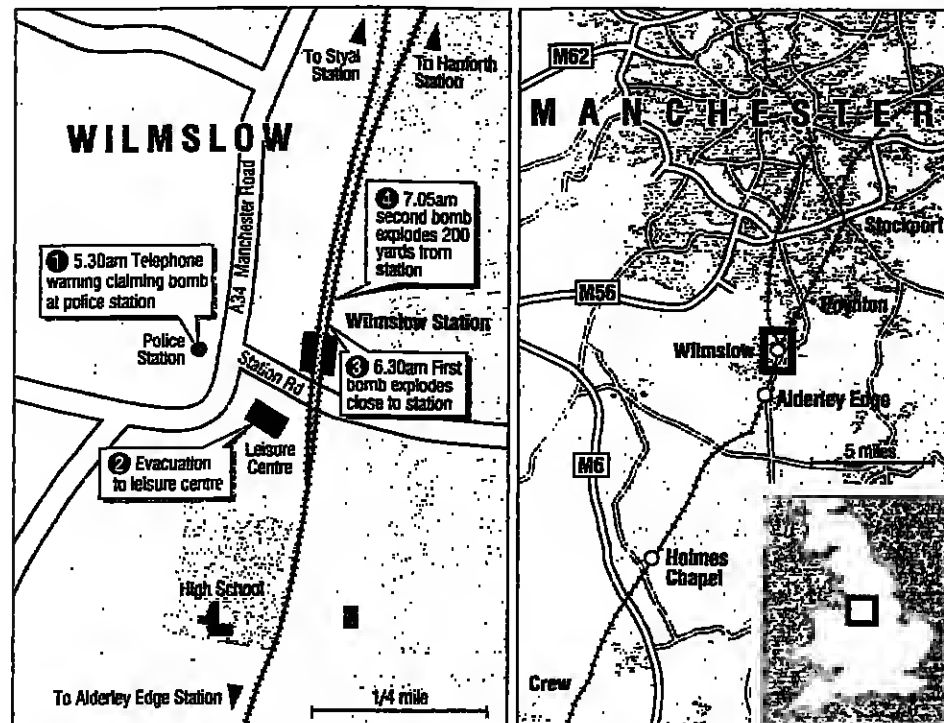
Passengers on four trains on the line at the time were stranded but eventually rescued. Local rail services were cancelled although the main West Coast line from Manchester to London remains largely unaffected.

Similar bomb warnings at Doncaster, South Yorkshire, closed the East Coast line for some time but it reopened when nothing was found. Army bomb squad officers combed the Wilmslow site before detectives moved in to investigate. The station was expected to reopen today but a Railtrack

spokesman, said there would be some continued disruption to services. The precise damage to track was unknown.

Police have warned since before Christmas of an increased threat of a bombing campaign prior to the election.

The Wilmslow attack is the latest in a number of attacks in the region. Last June, a huge IRA bomb devastated the centre of Manchester, and four years ago two schoolboys, Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball, were killed in Warrington.



## Party leaders snipe over peace process

Fran Abrams, Steve Boggan and Colin Brown

Before the dust from the Wilmslow bombings had settled, sniping broke out between the major parties as both Labour and the Tories apparently broke a cross-party agreement not to make political capital out of terrorist acts.

Tony Blair was reported to be "livid" over accusations by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, that Labour could not be trusted to be tough on terrorism. However, it emerged later that the deputy Labour leader, John Prescott, had attacked the Tories over the peace process earlier in the day.

During a campaign visit to Luton airport yesterday, Mr Prescott was stopped at the terminal by a Labour supporter, originally from Northern Ireland, who asked what a Labour government's policy towards the province would be. Mr Prescott told him: "We are going to sit down and talk. In that sense there is no difference between us and the Tories."

But he added: "The peace process broke down when Major decided in order to stay in power he had to do all sorts of deals over Northern Ireland."

Mr Howard put out a statement saying that Mr Blair had never once voted for the renewal of the Prevention of Ter-

rorism Act. "His vote - and the votes of his party - show that you cannot trust Labour to be tough on terrorism," it said.

Aides of Mr Blair responded by releasing details of an agreement struck between the two parties last week on how to act in the event of a terrorist attack during the election campaign. The agreement, which was similar to others followed over a number of years, said that no spokesman should overreact to any incident, and that any outrage expressed should be directed towards the terrorists.

Mr Blair gave vent to his anger in a letter to the Prime Minister accusing Mr Howard of "an extraordinary act of attempted opportunism: As you know we have given you and your government strong bipartisan support in your search for peace in Northern Ireland."

"It seems to me that making political capital out of a terrorist attack is an extremely irresponsible way for a Home Secretary to act. I doubt that those who have suffered from today's and previous IRA attacks will understand this extraordinary act of attempted opportunism."

The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney hit back, writing to Mr Blair to protest at Mr Prescott's comments. He referred to Mr Prescott's suggestion yesterday that the peace

process broke down when the Prime Minister decided to do "deals" over Northern Ireland in order to stay in power.

Dr Mawhinney said in his letter: "To make such a suggestion at any time, let alone on a day when it seems terrorist violence has once again scared the face of mainland Britain, is breathtakingly irresponsible and shows a cavalier disregard for the sensitivities of politics in Northern Ireland."

"Since you have, on many occasions, insisted that Labour is pursuing a 'bipartisan' approach to Northern Ireland issues, I am asking you immediately to disown John Prescott's remarks and make clear that they do not represent the Labour Party's view."

John Major, on an election visit to Bradford, did just that, describing the attack as "a two-fingered insult to democracy".

Calling on Sinn Fein leaders to condemn the bombing without "weasel words" Mr Major said: "I hope Sinn Fein IRA are not going to conduct their campaign with the ballot box in Northern Ireland and with bombs on the main land. People would be wise to be vigilant."

Despite increased security fears the Prime Minister said the attack would not stop the election campaign. "I shall be out there meeting the people," he said.



Vulnerable target: Railway officials and police officers at Wilmslow station yesterday following the IRA attack

Photograph: Andrew Buuman

## Railway failed to update security

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Crucial amendments overlooked after privatisation

Senior civil servants were left in the dark about who to contact in the event of a terrorist attack last year because British Rail procedures were not updated after privatisation, according to documents obtained by the Independent.

The Home Office manual of counter-terrorist contingency plans was reviewed last year. When officials sought to update their lists, they discovered that many numbers and job positions had changed dramatically after the sell-off of British Rail.

In a letter dated 29 October 1996 to Iain King, the security

project manager for British Rail, from the Department of Transport, civil servants ask for "amendments" to the manual that are "required in the light of privatisation and fragmentation of the rail industry".

"Some of the references have now been superseded and I would be grateful for your advice on who now employs the relevant personnel," adds Mike Halcy, a civil servant from the DoT.

Insiders say that many procedures are reviewed before Christmas, a time traditionally when terrorists target the main-

land. Railway sources were quick to point out that anti-terrorist police take charge of operations and they would co-ordinate any reaction to a terrorist attack.

A spokeswoman for the Home Office said: "These documents are regularly reviewed and updated."

Railways are a prime target for terrorists. The only fatality occurred in February 1991, when a bomb exploded in Victoria station, in London.

The only explosion on a train occurred on a commuter train from London to Ramsgate in

spring 1993. Police identified which train was carrying the device and they stopped it at Kent House and had just managed to evacuate the train when the device exploded.

The railway network is the only completely fenced network in the world, but in many places this provides inadequate protection from a determined bomber.

Yesterday's attacks were aimed at taking out Britain's two main rail arteries. Three bombs were placed in two locations - one on the West Coast line at Wilmslow, Cheshire - the other

at Doncaster, on the flagship East Coast route.

All were defused by controlled explosion - although commuter services in the North West were thrown into confusion and the East Coast line was paralysed for most of the morning. There were no fatalities.

The bombs were intended as a surgical strike on the country's rail network - a tactic the IRA used at Clapham Junction in 1991, when services ground to a halt and 1 million commuters were stranded.

London's extensive rail network is now covered by surveillance cameras and there is a police presence on many platforms to deter terrorist attacks.





# election countdown

## Basildon puts on the glitz for party big guns

Gordon Brown follows Michael Howard into the town that meant so much to Tories

Steve Beggan

The welcome was warm and came, inevitably, in the shape of an attractive young woman wearing a white mini-skirt and white high-heels. The election campaign had arrived in Essex.

Michael Howard shook her hand and strode confidently into Time nightclub, with its glitzy entrance and tacky, flashing wall lights. The Home Secretary was holding court ostensibly to discuss the club's progressive attitude to drug control.

But, given that it was located in Basildon, traditionally the nation's political barometer and a constituency recently abandoned by David Amess, the sitting Tory MP, the suspicion that he was here to woo the electorate was irresistible.

"It is a very important area for us," he admitted. "The whole of Essex is important and I am very confident we can win here. It would be a rash person who said there is nothing that can be done."

But, with the Tories defending a majority of only 1,480 and with Mr Amess hopping over to the safer seat of Southend West, there was little conviction in Mr Howard's voice.

When it was pointed out to him that there were no Conservatives left on the local council, his response was hardly upbeat. "There is no relationship between local elections and Parliamentary elections," he said. "There are countless examples of where we have low representation on the council, but hold the Parliamentary seat."

The mood in Basildon has undoubtedly changed since the Tories swept to victory there in 1992, a victory that heralded the national success hours later. The parties know the importance of the seat – and they both intend to win it.

As if to run home the point, Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, rode into town two hours after Mr Howard left and

delivered a blistering speech on the betrayal of Basildon Man.

Reminding them of John Major's promise not to increase VAT, he said: "Within a year, that promise had been broken. Tory promise, Tory betrayal." Then he reminded them of similar broken promises on insurance contributions, mortgage tax relief ... in fact, on 22 tax rises.

"Let me tell Michael Heseltine in terms he might understand," he said. "The Tories are taxing us before breakfast, as soon as we turn the heating on, taxing us before lunch and taxing us before dinner. And before you get up the next morning, we're being taxed all over again."

The audience – including a group who had switched from Tory to Labour – lapped it up.

Geraldine Evans, 51, landlady of The Barge in Vange, was typical of the group. "I have never worked so hard for so little in all my life," she said. "What the Conservatives have done has made me very sad. People don't seem to count for much any more – there are people in Basildon earning between £1.80 and £2.20 an hour. I never believed anyone as moderate as myself could vote Labour. But I've looked at their policies and they're closer to my own beliefs."

Tory stock was indeed low last night as Mr Brown savaged the party's performance during his speech to supporters. He drew gasps when he broke the news of Tim Smith's resignation and went further by making fun of the sitting MP's move eastwards.

"I came here hoping to meet David Amess," he said. "There is a courtesy in the House of Commons that when you visit a constituency of a sitting Tory MP you write him a letter – but mine was returned marked 'Return to sender. Gone away.' It seems David Amess is the only Tory candidate in this campaign who has moved closer to Europe."



Brought to heel: A member of staff going into the Time nightclub in Basildon, Essex, yesterday after welcoming Michael Howard, who had arrived to discuss the drug problem. Photograph: Brian Harris

## Essex road scheme takes a confusing turn ...

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

The Department of Transport was thrown into complete confusion yesterday by a ministerial "announcement" of an £87.5m road scheme for Essex. John Watts, the Minister for Roads, issued a press notice on "Conservative News" newspaper, announcing the scheme during a visit to the county, in which the Tories are defending three key marginal constituencies.

He said: "Noise on the A120 between Stansted and Braintree is to be reduced, and a section of the M11 is to be widened."

The news was presented as a victory for the "tireless" campaign that had been conducted by two local MPs, Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, and Sir Alan Haselhurst, MP for Saffron Walden.

But when *The Independent* asked the Department of Transport for the facts; when the decision had been taken and why the announcement had been improperly made during an election campaign, all questions were referred to the department's political adviser. A departmental press officer said: "We're in purdah; there's an election on. It is not a departmental matter."

The Highways Agency said it would try to find the answers to factual questions about the scheme, specifically when it had been asked to carry out a review of noise mitigation measures on the A120.

Some hours later, the ministerial political adviser, Lucy Miller, said that the announcement of the roads scheme had been made as part of the November budget package, along with many other roads schemes. She thought that Mr Watts's announcement of the noise mitigation review was "a genuine announcement."

But it is departmental policy to make public announcements of road schemes as early as possible, to relieve local concern and clarify any threat of blight on affected homes and other property. Ms Miller thought the decision on the noise review had been taken "some time ago."

At that point the Highways Agency said that the Department of Transport press officer who had earlier refused to say anything would now answer all questions. The department was unable to answer any questions because it is caught up in election rules which prohibit any action that might be taken as partisan. *The Independent* was told later that the Watts scheme was not a government scheme at all, but an Essex County Council project, and that no decision had yet been taken on the noise review.

## Ashdown meets hardened criminal with a soft spot

Barrie Clement

A self-confessed armed robber yesterday took a tough line on criminals and confessed a soft spot for Paddy Ashdown.

Speaking from behind bars at Colchester police station, Steven Tansey, who is in the third year of a six-year sentence, thought prisons were "too soft". There were curtains, carpets and in some cells electricity. Military-style boot camps were just the ticket as far as he was concerned.

He would have volunteered for the nearby camp, but he was too far into his sentence to qualify.

As Mr Ashdown toured the "custody suite" at the police station, Tansey, who was jailed for robbing a Post Office armed with a knife, vol-

unteered that he would have voted Labour if he wasn't "inside", but that he didn't really trust Tony Blair.

"I think he might have something up his sleeve," said Tansey, who is due for release next year and was helping police with "other inquiries".

Despite his leanings towards Labour he thought Mr Ashdown was "a good bloke" who knew what he was talking about.

Alas the Liberal Democrat leader, visiting a key constituency for his party, never got a chance to persuade the forlorn Tansey of the party's political virtues. Mr Ashdown was guided away by a custody officer as the prisoner told of his "smashing family" and how he had got into bad company.

Officers at the station failed to

share the prisoner's enthusiasm for the efficacy of a "short, sharp, shock" at the local boot camp.

Chief Inspector Peter Sheldrake pointed out that the authorities there were failing to "attract" the inmates they were looking for.

There were 32 places at the camp, meant for 18 to 21-year-olds, but only 11 of them had been filled. "You've got to be career-minded to get into the place," said Ch Insp Sheldrake.

"They are struggling to find people who meet the criteria." He said that because it was an open regime serious offenders were not countenanced.

Emphasising the issue of law and order yesterday, Mr Ashdown commented that boot camps were "huge-ly expensive and tough sounding

gimmicks", and that the boot camp inmates were costing the taxpayer nearly £1,935 a week each. "That is more expensive than a stay at the Savoy."

Of more concern to the police officers was their inability to keep persistent young offenders off the streets. One said: "They spend most of their time committing burglaries to feed their drug habit and then they are taken into care." Pointing down to the cells, he said: "It's a joke down-stairs. They see care as an opportunity to have a dinner, a wash and a shave and then they are off again."

Earlier in the day, Mr Ashdown himself was at the scene of a crime. The Liberal Democrat leader was giving his considered opinions on the day's events to a posse of camera

crews when suddenly a brace of ruffians came past in a lorry.

The bald, middle-aged "vix" in the passenger seat – who seemed strangely familiar – grinned humourously at Mr Ashdown and invited the driver to drown out the interviews by sounding his horn. On the back of the lorry was a large advertisement: "Britain's Booming. Don't Let Labour Blow It."

This was Dr Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, who was on a charm offensive round the streets of Westminster.

As confirmed by police at Colchester, Dr Mawhinney was guilty of an offence – sounding his horn without good reason. Said a constable: "On a bad day I would have picked him for breach of the peace."



On patrol: Mr Ashdown with two Colchester officers. Photograph: John Voss



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## election countdown

## Brown promises more cash for health

Steve Boggan and Anthony Bevins

Labour says it will give NHS more money every year on condition it is spent on patient care

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, last night matched the Tory pledge to increase health spending year-on-year, in real terms – after months of bailing by ministers.

Speaking in Basildon, Essex, Mr Brown said: "I told the Shadow Cabinet today that a Labour government will spend more on the NHS. Indeed government spending will rise in real terms faster than inflation."

But he added that he and Chris Smith, the party's health spokesman, would be setting one condition for the extra money: "a condition that will bring comfort to every patient of the NHS. Yes, we will give the NHS more money every year. But unlike the Tories, we will insist that every penny of that goes not to administration, but to patient care."

One of Mr Brown's aides said

later that the promise would be included in Labour's manifesto, finalised at a special meeting of the Shadow Cabinet and the party national executive yesterday, for publication next week.

"We're just showing that it is not true that the Tories are spending more on the NHS than we plan to," he said. "What is more important is our commitment to move funding from bureaucracy into patient care."

Earlier, Tony Blair had promised that the Labour manifesto would help create a bond of trust with the electorate, and would not promise anything that could not be delivered.

In spite of Conservative efforts to divert attention from the main themes, by concentrating their fire on trade union rights, Mr Blair played up the "number one priority" of education, saying: "A vote for Labour is a

vote for small class sizes, better-quality teaching, new targets for reading and writing, more nursery places and a chance to learn new skills throughout your life."

David Blunkett, the party's education spokesman, said: "This will be the education election." But the Labour leader also said that the new manifesto would mark "the burial of tax-and-spend politics

from Labour" and that it would contain an agenda for tax cuts.

"It pledges that we will cut VAT on heating to its lowest possible level of 5 per cent. And, for the first time, it includes our ambition to cut the starting rate of tax to 10p."

He said later, however, that the 10p starting rate of income tax was an "ambition" and not a firm commitment, with timescale attached. "We're not

going to make promises that we can't deliver on this," he said.

Asked whether the burial of tax and spend and his agenda for lower taxes meant a cut in the overall tax burden, Mr Blair made no commitment either way – other than to say that while the Tories were promising reductions in Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax for the benefit of the wealthy, Labour would concentrate its efforts on

tax cuts for the low-paid. He said any pledge made "we will keep and the single most important thing in this election in relation to tax is going to be to rebuild the trust between government and people because that trust was broken by the Conservatives."

Today is the fifth anniversary of John Major's pledge, given during the 1992 election campaign, that there would be no extension of VAT. It was extended to domestic fuel and power bills in the 1993 Budget.

## Prescott makes merry as man of people

Jojo Moyes

"We've got Mr Soames, now there's a man. He's that walking food mountain you see on TV. Mind you, I shouldn't talk too much..."

The speaker pushed his hair from his forehead, and his jowly features into a shy smile, and waited for the laugh. The delivery may have been pure Les Dawson – but the words were pure John Prescott.

In the second week of his "Prescott Express" nationwide tour of 90 key seats, the deputy leader of the Labour Party was working the crowds with the professionalism of a veteran cabaret performer. Whether he had, as was rumoured, been "exiled" to the regions to prevent him from saying something too blunt for the spin doctors, or whether he was simply deemed the best person to bring New Labour's message to a cynical electorate, there was no doubt he was playing to his strengths.

Striding out of the reach of his ever-changing team of minders, Mr Prescott appears determined to keep the scent of stage-management from his dealings with real people.

Donning a server's hat to dole out meat pies to pensioners, or hinging terror to his advisers' faces by donning a toy policeman's hat in front of toddlers and photographers and asking "What am I if I've got this on?", Mr Prescott certainly does it his way. Just as plain-speaking Clare Short



House calls: John Prescott meeting the people by resurrecting the unfashionable political art of door-to-door campaigning in Welwyn Garden City yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

has been redeemed in the eyes of the electorate, the deputy leader's manner elicits an unusual level of warmth. Gemma Layton and Jacqui Bednarek, both 18, from Leighton Buzzard, spent some time discussing with him Labour's plans for education. "He's not high and mighty at all," they said. "He's down to earth. Not like that John Major."

And did they trust him? "Yes".

It is the issue of trust that Mr Prescott is pushing hard, capitalising on continuing barrage of Tory sleaze allegations. Everywhere he travels, Mr Prescott is handing out "pledge" cards and signing them. These outline Labour's early pledges for class sizes, young offenders, NHS waiting lists, youth unemployment and the economy, (and the means of financing them), and they are head-

lined: "Keep this card and see that we keep our promises."

The cards are a key feature of the tour. "The signature is a personal thing. We're hoping it will help build trust," Mr Prescott says. "There's a lot of cynicism around and we're coming to areas where you very rarely see politicians, during elections or otherwise."

Indeed, the looks of incredulity

that greet Mr Prescott in Northampton or the departure lounge of Luton Airport, suggest this may be true. One teenager who had his pledge card signed hissed at a friend: "That's the leader of the Labour Party."

To drive home this theme, Mr Prescott in his first rally on Tuesday night opened with a rousing attack on Tory sleaze. Speaking largely off the cuff, he captivated an audience

of locals and party members at Northampton's Parklands Community Centre as he rapped with lively and seamless political oratory.

But while drawing easy laughter on the subject of William Waldegrave's "misleading of Parliament", or Neil Hamilton's "had judgement", the questions that voters ask in reply are not about sleaze, but the issues that directly affect them

– pensions, education, unemployment and crime.

The answers they get appear to satisfy Mr Prescott is, he keeps saying, only going to be "realistic". He won't promise what he can't deliver. Sometimes he is quite blunt, but were the message coming from anyone other than this apparently belligerent bluff Northerner one wonders whether they would take it so readily.

## Tories return to the attack on Labour's union agenda

Fran Abrams Political Correspondent

Labour's plans for trade-union recognition came under renewed attack yesterday as the Conservatives tried to expose what they said were plans for cross-European co-operation between unions.

Clearly pleased with reaction to Monday's onslaught on the Opposition's plans to recognise unions if more than half the workforce in a company agreed, ministers moved to take the issue a step further.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, highlighted details of a manifesto published last year by the European Trade Union Confederation which backed an "employment union" similar to planned economic and monetary union. If implemented, the plans would

lead to a 35-hour week, harmonised tax and job-creation policies and an EU employment quango as well as expansion of the public sector, Mr Lang said. He said Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, had backed the manifesto. "Today's revelations show Labour's agenda for boosting union power doesn't end with statutory recognition. They are also seeking to mislead... people into thinking the Social Chapter poses no threat. But the fact is that the trade unions are salivating at the prospect of the new powers it would give them."

Mr Prescott said Mr Lang's claims were based "on a total misapprehension".

"I was invited to address the European trade unions on February 1, 1996 as a vice-president of the Party of European Socialists, to discuss the employ-

ment chapter proposed at the Inter-Governmental Conference (of EU leaders). No pact was signed. The employment chapter under discussion is about job creation and reducing unemployment. It is not about employee rights or a four-day week."

Tony Blair issued a fresh defence of Labour's plans for recognition within British companies, saying New Labour had no plans to return to the straits of the 1960s or 1970s. The Conservatives had been indulging in scare tactics, he said.

"There is no return under our proposals to the legislation of the 1970s – no secondary action, no secondary picketing, flying picketing, no return to the days of strikes without ballots or the days when union leaders didn't have to be elected by ballots. Even after every change we

are proposing, Britain would remain with a more restricted trade-union legislative framework than any country in the Western world."

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, said both parties' histories were coming back to haunt them, but he backed Labour's view that employees should be able to seek union recognition. "There is no reason why a workforce should not vote for the union that will represent it. There is no reason why any individual who does not wish to be a member of a union should not be able to do so. This is a hoary old chestnut dragged up from the past. If you look and see what people actually do in British industry today, they build partnerships, some involving unions, some not. That's the way of the future."



Flesh of inspiration: Norma Major turns the spotlight on cameramen in Bradford yesterday Photograph: Tom Pilon

## significant shorts

## Thatcher attacks union 'bullies'

Baroness Thatcher visited Conservative Central Office yesterday for the first time since she was forced out of office in 1990. Lady Thatcher spent two hours inside touring different departments.

She told reporters: "Britain is strong. Her economy is strong. Now, we see Mr Blair's Labour party is wanting to bring in legislation to enhance the power of the trade unions. He wants to increase the power of the bully boys, to go back to things we managed to see off." Fran Abrams

## SNP tries to stop TV debate

Counsel for the Scottish Nationalist Party told a Scottish judge yesterday that the party would be disadvantaged in its campaign if it were not allowed to take part in the proposed television debate between party leaders. The SNP is seeking an interim interdict (an injunction) to stop STV and Grampian broadcasting the proposed debate.

## Abortion is election message

Cardinal Thomas Winning, leader of Scotland's Roman Catholics, has urged members of his church to make abortion the most important issue in the election. In a four-page election message, to be distributed to churches on Easter Sunday, the Cardinal states that "the first priority for Christians... is to uphold the right to life".

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## election countdown

# Used politician: charming model, one careful party, a real goer

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Would you buy a used car from Steven Norris? Thousands did and "not one of my customers ever complained", the former transport minister reminds us. For a serial charmer like Mr Norris selling things is a lifelong obsession. Politics, you see, is not just about the policies, but how well you peddle them. Rarely bested, his skill at the despatch box often saw him upstage cabinet colleagues. Despite his obvious talents, high office eluded him. Once a millionaire, he suffered financial losses in the 1980s and his political career stalled when it emerged he had wooed a string of women as well as a wife.

Now the former car dealer turned politician is leaving the Commons to "repair the hole in my personal balance sheet". "I have been rich and I have been famous, but I would rather be rich," he charms.

Before he goes, Mr Norris' pitch-perfect patter will be used

Randeep Ramesh follows a consummate performer making his valedictory sales pitch to the electorate

to rally true-blue troops in London and the South-east. He still turns in a crossless performance. The tone is insistent, the stare unwavering and the message uncluttered. "Vote for the social chapter, the minimum wage, the union bosses—that is New Labour. The electorate have to remember what this is really about. The economy, stupid..." he intones.

And what about New Labour, Steve—dodgy politics with dodgy policies? "Tony Blair, lovely chap. A shade too draconian for me. Really he encapsulated Douglas Hurd's ideas when he was shadow Home Secretary better than we did." Sorry, Steve?

"Oh Jack Straw, very capable and very nice. His mother is my constituent and a very good local councillor. I can't believe he believes what he says..." Oh. For Mr Norris this is politics, stupid. "What unites all politi-



Steve Norris: Soundbite master leaving Commons

firm—Mr Norris believes leaving Westminster does not mean leaving politics.

"On transport I might disagree with Andrew [Andrew Smith—Labour's front bench spokesman on transport] on how to tackle the investment problems facing the Tube—but I want what's best for the passenger and I will work for that."

He even admits to the fact that his deregulation has its "weaknesses". "The sheer volume of competition has let in too many cowboys," says Mr Norris.

The next administration will find it difficult to dismiss his ideas. Mr Norris single-handedly replaced the Conservatives' road-building fetish with a distinctly green-edged policy.

Only last week, his admission that protesters were right to oppose the controversial Newbury bypass had ministers grumbling. "Steven took his job seriously," confessed one senior civil servant, "but not himself."



MP Tim Smith and his wife Jenny after his resignation yesterday over the cash-for-questions scandal. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Tim Smith thrust back to obscurity

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

Tim Smith, the former Northern Ireland minister, will now return to the obscurity from which only the cash-for-questions scandal has removed him after 17 years as an MP.

Mr Smith's years in Parliament have been undistinguished and uneventful. He first came to brief prominence when he won the 1977 Ashfield by-election, a Labour stronghold which it lost because of the financial crisis and mid-term blues of the 1974-9 government.

He lost the seat at the subsequent 1979 election but came back to Parliament at a by-election in 1982, beating off the challenge of one Tony Blair.

Mr Smith's reputation of anonymity once compelled the former Labour minister, Gerald Kaufman, to observe, when Mr Smith appeared at the Despatch Box as a Northern Ireland minister: "I knew the honourable gentleman had learned to crawl, but I did not know that he had learned to speak."

He was educated at Harrow and Oxford and spent his early years as a tax specialist. As a result he acquired a batch of consultancies in the financial sphere: the British Insurance and Investment Brokers' Association, the Commodity Traders Group, Lloyds Group Union and the British Venture Capital Association.

But it was his undeclared work in 1987 for Mohamed Al Fayed that was to be his undoing. Evidence leaked last week from the

Dowry inquiry into cash for questions reveals that Mr Smith was given several bundles of £50 notes by Mr Al Fayed and was unable to say exactly how much money he received, though it was thought to be between £18,000 and £25,000. The evidence made clear that Mr Smith had taken the money, had declared the money to the local Revenue only as part of partnership earnings with his wife and failed to note his interest on the members' register.

Although Mr Smith says he told the Chief Whip, David Waddington, in 1989 about the payments, Mr Smith still went on to become a junior Northern Ireland minister in 1994 as a result of the reshuffle caused by the resignation of Tim Yeo, who was involved in a sex scandal.

He promptly resigned when allegations of the payments were made and investigated by Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, but a crucial delay of at least 10 days between Mr Smith telling Sir Robin and his eventual resignation has not been explained by the Government.

Mr Smith admitted to his constituency that he had taken the money and yet its officers stood by him. Moreover, John Major, the Prime Minister, did not refer Mr Smith to the Members' Interest Committee, despite the clear breach of the rules, and so after his resignation Mr Smith returned to backbench obscurity and, amazingly, a seat on the Public Accounts Committee which monitors public expenditure.

## Hope of reprieve handed to GP fundholders

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

GP fundholders could be given a reprieve following assurances by Chris Smith, Labour's shadow health secretary, to GP leaders that he would allow flexibility in his plans for replacing them with commissioning groups.

BMA leaders emerged from the meeting saying they were encouraged that Mr Smith would allow some GPs to hold budgets provided they were permitted by other GPs in their locality.

Mr Smith's aides said fundholding would be replaced by joint commissioning for NHS care within four years of a Labour government taking office.

But the promise of flexibility could forestall the threat of a campaign to stop the plans by some GP fundholders. John Chisholm, deputy chairman of the GPs' committee said: "Chris Smith was pragmatic and sensible about it. I think his policies are still evolving. It would be ridiculous for the average fundholder to conclude from what we heard that fundholding will be dead under a Labour government."

However, Mr Chisholm said BMA leaders told Mr Smith that about a third of Britain's

30,000 GPs would like to continue with fundholding.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, is planning to go on the offensive next week by announcing that 53 per cent of all doctors are now voluntary fundholders who would be hit by Labour's plans. Sources close to Mr Dorrell said Labour had claimed the GPs had joined against their will. "The BMA had given the lie to Labour's claims," the source said.

BMA leaders last night denied they were on a collision course with Labour and rejected reports they had given Mr Smith "some home truths" in their meeting, which had been called to clarify Labour's plans. Labour's election manifesto next week will pledge to replace fundholding with joint commissioning by GPs co-operating together to supply care, ending the system under which fundholders can enable patients in effect to jump the queues for treatment by NHS trusts.

The BMA said that there were still a lot of "grey areas" about Labour's plans. "We think those who entered fundholding have put in a massive amount of time, effort and money and clearly we don't believe it can be abandoned overnight," said a BMA source.

## Open and shut book for shy Redwood

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

There had, apparently, been a genuine punter in the Victoria Street branch of Books, Etc. just before John Redwood arrived to sign copies of his new tome. But he or she had taken fright on seeing the massed ranks of Her Majesty's press and had left.

The former Secretary of State for Wales was left forlornly signing a huge pile of paperbacks of *Our Country, Our Country* while the backs fired questions at him in the hope of catching a hint of dissent.

Was this the opening shot in a Tory leadership campaign? Why had Mr Redwood first cancelled the official launch of his book and then staged a hastily arranged signing? Had he been strong-armed by the Prime Minister? Had his talks with the whips been enjoyable? Was his anti-European stance splitting his party?

But Mr Redwood steadfastly toed the line. "I am singing from a very similar hymn sheet to the Chancellor," he said. "The Cabinet is absolutely right to say 'no' to a fudged single currency. This book says there is very unlikely to be anything but a fudged single currency on offer."

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# Scruffy? We're too broke to be smart, say teachers

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Teachers are struggling to gain respect in the face of television shows which portray them as crazy and poverty which forces them to wear scruffy clothes, a conference of the profession was told yesterday.

While the police and doctors are portrayed as caring and heroic in television shows such as BBC1's *Casualty* and Carlton's *Thiefcatchers*, BBC1's *Chalk* has a mentally unstable deputy head and teachers who lose their trousers.

At the annual conference of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in Cardiff, complaints were made about the show during a debate about the need to improve teachers' status. Members were also told that student teachers were teased by pupils because of their limited wardrobes.

Sara Kemsley, from Tonbridge Grammar School in Kent said: "We have a dazzling array of high-quality drama on television: *The Bill*, *Hill Street Blues*, *ER*, *Casualty*, *Peak Practice*. And then we have *Chalk*."

"The police and doctors are promoted as being full of dedication, hard-working people battling heroically against the odds and under-funding."

"They deliver a service which is respected. Then you have a perverse and rapid comedy where you have an empty school apparently run by a mentally unstable deputy head and a witty plot involving a loss of trousers."

There are two classrooms in which there are 15 delinquent youngsters and no attempt is being made to teach them."

Peter Smith, the association's general secretary, objected to the show on the grounds that it was bad and unfunny. "I don't take it seriously as a malicious travesty of teaching. It is a lousy show and should be taken off." The series, by Steven Moffat, a former teacher, features Eric Slatt, played by David Bamber, as the deputy head of a comprehensive. A second series is already in preparation.

Kevin Lygo, head of Independent Commissions Entertainment, who commissioned the series said: "*Chalk* is a comedy. Just as Ben Elton's *Thin Blue Line* does not reflect the modern police force nor the Vicar of Dibley the Church of England today, *Chalk* was never intended to reflect life in British schools."

Earlier, the conference was told that student teachers were too hard-up to look smart. Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, said recently that scruffy teachers should not be in the profession. But a survey commissioned by the Association from Oxford Brookes University revealed student teachers' financial plight.

Caroline Wake, 23, a newly qualified teacher from Holyport Manor School in Berkshire, said that she had been forced to take out three student loans during her training. From next week she had to start paying back her loans because her

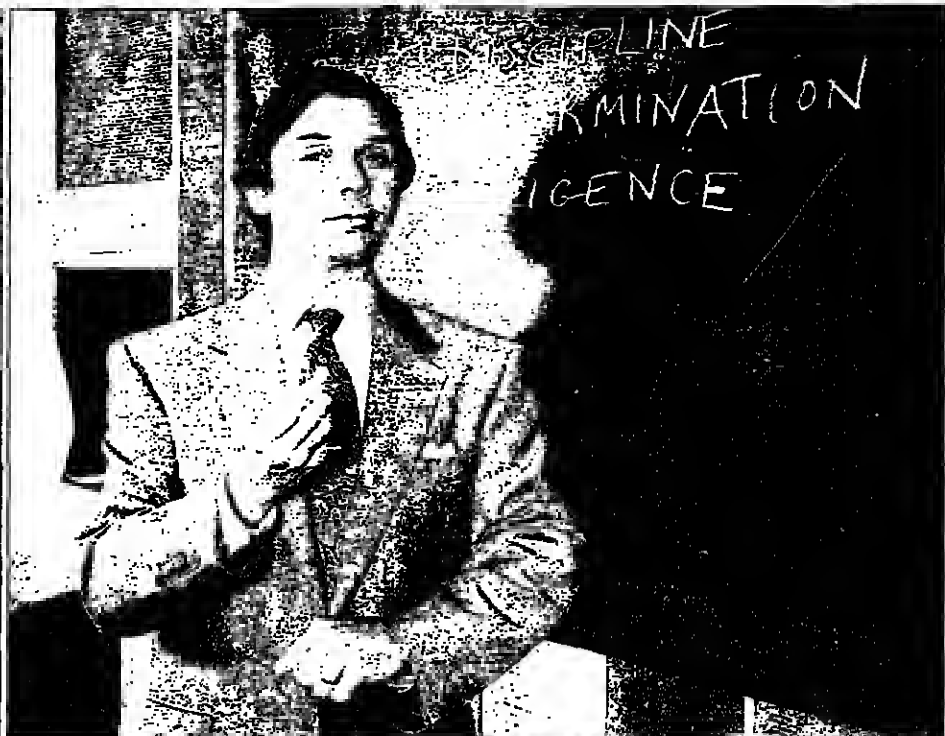


Image makers: Jon Alderton playing a dishevelled teacher in the Seventies series *Please, Sir* (left), and David Bamber as Slatt, trying to make his mark at Galfast High in *Chalk*

salary as a special-needs teacher had reached £15,000. Of that, £4,500 a year went on rent, well over £5,000 food £1,500 on tax, £1,500 on telephone, gas and electricity and house maintenance and £1,000 on a car.

Paying back her loan at £840 a year left her £160 a year for clothes and everything else.

Ms Wake, wearing a floral dress, T-shirt and cardigan,

said: "Am I really expected to look smart at school on that?"

Andy Garner, head of history at Chantry High School, in Suffolk, who earns £25,000 after 25 years in teaching said:

"The local Oxfam shop has better clothes in it than our staff room - or it did have until I bought this jacket." He said that when his son joined the school where he taught everyone knew

that he was his son because the holes in their clothes were in the same places.

Pupils are still making false allegations of assault against teachers, it was said at the ATL

conference. One teacher was arrested though her headteacher was in the room with her at the time of the alleged assault and saw immediately that the allegation was groundless.

# Sea change to blame for end of dinosaur era

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

The dinosaurs were already dying off when a massive asteroid crashed into the Earth about 65 million years ago, according to a leading group of British scientists.

The real cause of their decline was probably a combination of climate changes, such as volcanic eruptions, combined with a gradual but significant drop in sea levels around the world, said a team of 22 experts.

The dinosaurs were not the only creatures to suffer as global climate change altered habitats, said Dr Norman McLeod, who led the research over the past 10 years.

Millions of species also disappeared over the course of almost 11 million years before and after the asteroid impact - an event geologists call the "Cretaceous-Tertiary biotic transition" - or, more pronounceably, the "K-T boundary".

The asteroid impact in the Gulf of Mexico was confirmed last month by geological evidence that was finally tied together by an American team.

But the British team, including scientists at the Natural History Museum, University College, London, and Birkbeck College reckon it was in fact only the *coup de grace* for a huge number of species which disappeared from the fossil record soon afterwards.

"There are other ways than an asteroid to produce extinctions," said Dr McLeod, from the Natural History Museum. "The sea level now is, historically, low." That is because

"mid-ocean ridges" have fallen as the Earth's crust has shifted, enlarging the ocean basins and expanding their volume.

The effect was to lower the sea level around the world. It would have fallen by about 50 to 100 metres over the course of millions of years. But that has the effect of changing the climate, making summer and winter more extreme, and so in turn altering and fragmenting the habitats that species were used to.

Eventually animals and plants would be marooned in "islands" of favourable climate, and so become vulnerable to any change in conditions. Only the more adaptable would survive. Among those which did were mammals. However, millions of plant and animal species at all levels of complexity became extinct as sea levels fell and weather systems changed.

The latest findings are published this week in the *Journal of the Geological Society*.

The asteroid impact theory had suggested that a huge extra-terrestrial rock hit the Earth, throwing up enough dust to cut out sunlight and cause the equivalent of a "nuclear winter" which wiped out the dinosaurs.

But Professor Alan Lord of UCL, one of the paper's authors, said: "We can't say that the meteorite didn't deal the final blow, but they seemed to be fading anyway."

"Maybe it was something like genetic exhaustion - they couldn't adapt."

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## news

# Kick in the pants for Tesco over cheap Levi's

Nigel Cope and  
Chris Hughes

A supermarket chain has sparked a possible price war in Levi jeans by offering the fashionable 501 brand at prices up to £25 lower than those in other stores.

Tesco's decision to charge just £30 for Levi 501s compared to prices of over £50 in Levi's own stores, brought an angry reaction from Levi Strauss and could prompt other retailers to join a price war in the battle for the "denim pound".

Tesco's move to start selling Levi 501s in 128 of its supermarkets this week was made without Levi's permission as the jeans giant said it did not consider supermarkets an appropriate place for its products to be sold. Levi's spends millions advertising its jeans which it promotes as stylish fashion essentials aimed principally at a teenage audience. It regards its jeans as too sexy to be sold alongside the frozen peas and too rolls in a supermarket.

The move to cut the price of jeans is just the latest in a series of assaults by supermarkets on goods it regards as over priced. Other targets have included books, medicines and compact discs. The jeans battle is also a re-run of the attempt by the supermarkets to sell cut-



price perfumes a few years ago when the fragrance houses claimed the products needed to be sold by expert staff.

Levi's refusal to supply Tesco has forced the supermarket to go direct to an official Levi supplier in Mexico where it has secured a supply of 45,000 men's 501s. It immediately claimed the moral high ground saying the price of some branded goods were often too high.

"Tesco aims to bring the best products at unbeatable prices," Tesco director Simon Unwins said. "Unfortunately some brands try to restrict the market and force customers to pay

a higher price. We believe that is unfair."

Levi's denied that it tried to control prices. "We absolutely have no desire to set retail prices. It's a matter for individual stockists," a spokesman said. However, it does have strict criteria which stockists must meet. These are that staff should be extensively trained in the subject of "jeanswear", that there should be a clearly delineated Levi's area and a range of styles at different prices.

Mark Elliott at Levi's said: "We are concerned to make the shopping environment as pleasant and appealing to customers

as possible. There are objective criteria which stores must meet, and they [Tesco] didn't meet them." Tesco has only managed to secure a supply of men's button-up fly 501s in stonewash red,

black and yellow. It has paid £25.62 per pair so charging £30 still gives the supermarket a mark up of 15 per cent. Levi's said it was concerned that it could not verify the source of

the Tesco jeans and is investigating the matter. However, the company said it would consider supplying Tesco if it modified the way it sold the jeans. The company denied that

image was involved. "We stock a wide variety of outlets, from department stores to mail order, all with a very different feel, because our customers want to shop in different environments."

But department stores have a clear ring-fence around their jeans and the staff are expert in selling clothes. That's the environment we're looking for."

Business comment, page 25

Bottom line: A Tesco assistant with a pair of Levi jeans. Levi's television advertisements appeal to a teenage audience

Photograph: Edward Syles

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## Doctors told not to impose Caesareans

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

Doctors have been told not to impose a caesarean on a pregnant woman if she is capable of deciding against medical intervention, even though her refusal might risk her death or that of her unborn child.

That ruling, by the Court of Appeal yesterday, makes it clear that a foetus has no greater rights than those of its mother and that the medical profession should only turn to the courts for permission to operate without consent where the woman lacks the capacity to decide for herself.

While Miss MB, the woman involved in the case, lost her appeal, the guidance was viewed as a potential brake on the eagerness of doctors to resort to the courts in the face of a woman's refusal to undergo an unwanted caesarean, and on the willingness of judges to authorise non-consensual surgery.

Future cases, however, will still turn heavily on whether individual women in the final stages of pregnancy are judged "competent" to withhold consent or not.

The judges were giving their reasons for deciding at a late-night emergency hearing five weeks ago that doctors could carry out necessary treatment, using any "reasonable force" necessary, on Miss MB, whose

baby was in the footling breech position. Lady Justice Butler-Sloss and Lords Justice Saville and Ward decided against her on the facts of her case because she had refused at the last minute to have her baby by caesarean when suffering temporary mental incompetence caused by needle phobia.

The fear of needles, which caused her to refuse an anaesthetic, dominated her thinking and made her incapable of making a decision, the judges said.

Beverley Lawrence, Beech, chairman of the Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services, castigated a "gagging" order which bans identification of the hospital, health authority and doctors involved in the case as well as the mother and child. She said: "Women need to know which hospital was involved, and which consultant."

The appeal court, however, overruled two earlier statements by senior judges. Lord Donaldson, former Master of the Rolls, had been wrong to suggest in a 1992 case that the death of a viable foetus might be a valid consideration in deciding a dispute over medical treatment when this had never been sanctioned by Parliament, and Sir Stephen Brown, the President of the Family Division, wrongly allowed "the interest of the foetus" to prevail in a later case the same year, they said.

## Killer of hero in 1967 is jailed

Nicole Veash

A schizophrenic murderer who killed a man during a bungled bank robbery 30 years ago was yesterday sentenced at the Old Bailey.

Unemployed Arthur Jackson was sent to the top security mental hospital Broadmoor for shooting Anthony Fletcher through the heart in 1967.

The court heard that Jackson, 60, had shown no remorse over the death of Fletcher, who was posthumously awarded the George Cross. He denied murder but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

Years later, he confessed to the killing, while serving a jail term in the United States for attempted murder.

Mr Justice Potts told Jackson: "A hospital order without restriction of time in your case is appropriate. I am satisfied that as a result of your mental illness you are an exceptionally dangerous man."

Although Jackson will be detained in Broadmoor, he may be transferred to a hospital in his native Scotland in the future.

Outside the court, Fletcher's widow, Valerie, with her children Martin, 39, Tracy, 32, and Jason, 31, expressed deep disappointment at the sentence.

"We thought we would come here today to hear him told he would never see daylight again," she said. Her son, Jason, who was visibly angry at the outcome, said: "I wanted him to be told that he would be in jail for the rest of his natural life. Justice hasn't been done."

Orlando Pownall, for the Crown, said Jackson had shown no remorse for the shooting.

In 1967, Jackson robbed the National Provincial Bank in Knightsbridge, London and had escaped with £130 when Mr Fletcher, a self-employed contractor, intervened. He chased the gunman up a cul-de-sac but as he approached, Jackson shot him in the chest and he died almost immediately.



# This island race – in seven million snapshots



Past and Present: Wantage marketplace in Oxfordshire as it is today and as it was back in 1954. The Fifties scene is among the archives at the National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon, Wiltshire Photograph: John Lawrence

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

## Huge archive of images of the English townscape and countryside emerges from obscurity

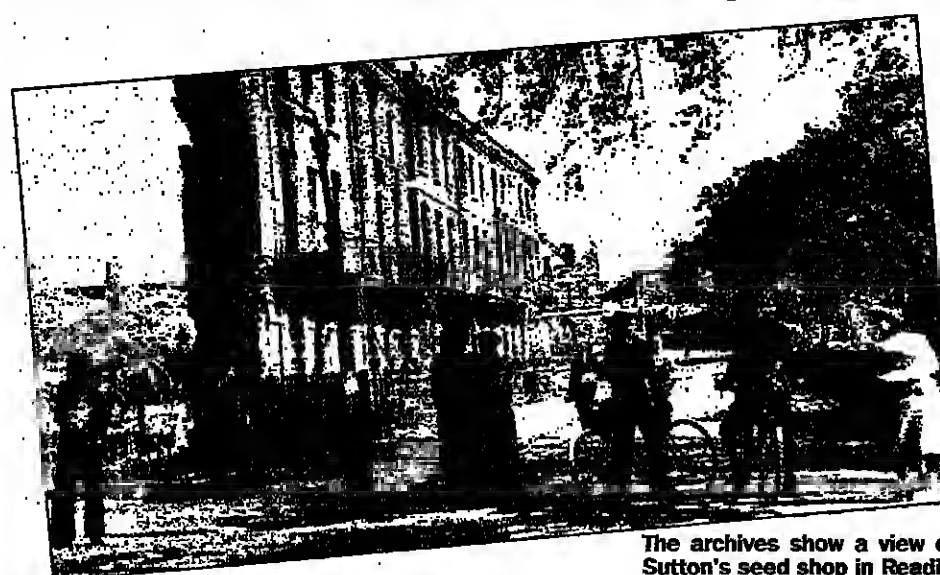
England's townscapes and countryside may be changing fast, but the coal mines, gas works, workaday farm buildings and parades of mundane shops swept away in recent decades have not disappeared without trace.

Today one of the country's biggest archival resources emerges from obscurity with opening of a gallery and shop to publicise the treasures of the National Monuments Record Centre.

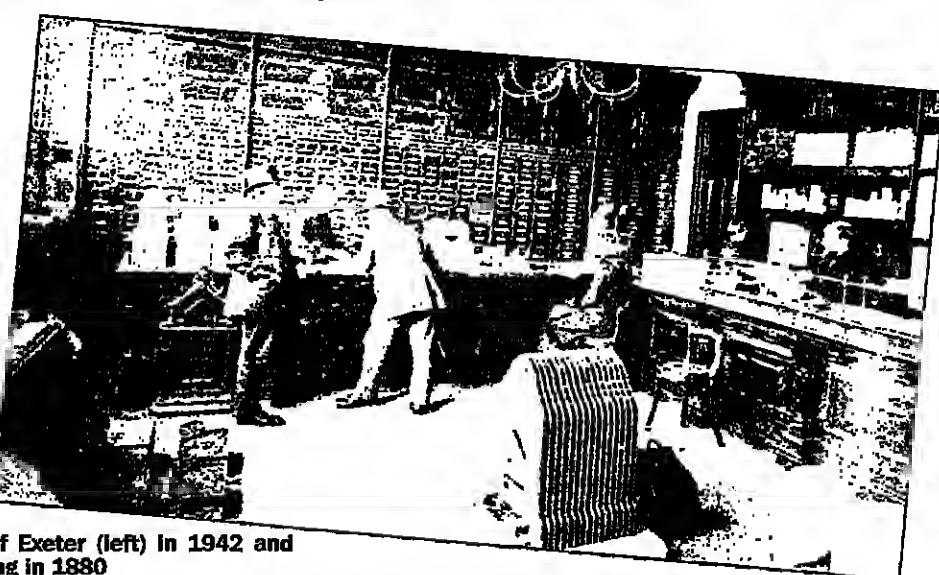
The NMR holds more than 7 million photographs, drawings and maps covering every aspect of the architecture and archaeology of England – all available to the public, though the centre in Swindon, Wiltshire, had only 5,200 visitors last year.

It is the records arm of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, an £11m-a-year state-funded operation whose work betrays the dusty image of its formal title.

Consider, for example, the physical transformation of large parts of Nottinghamshire,



The archives show a view of Exeter (left) in 1942 and Sutton's seed shop in Reading in 1880



South Yorkshire and the North-east – let alone the social upheaval – caused by the closure of coal mines over the past decade.

Fit-head gear and rail sidings have disappeared and slag heaps have become grassy hillsides of suspiciously regular shape. Yet without the commission there would be no comprehensive picture of what has gone.

Its specialists have recently completed a detailed photographic survey of not just the

country's coal mines, but all the other buildings that went to make up the mining community – the 'National Union of Mineworkers' offices, welfare clubs, sports grounds, local shops and colliery houses.

Two long-term projects are

the surveying of non-conformist chapels, many of which have been turned into houses, and farm buildings. Most are unlisted and are often removed from the landscape altogether.

Only the NMR pictures remain to inform historians or in-

terested local people of what a particular stretch of countryside actually looked like. A national survey of hospitals is also under way.

Planners and architects use the NMR to research vernacular building styles and archae-

ologists draw on its air photographs and site historical site details. Old maps and photographs are also used occasionally to settle boundary disputes between neighbours.

None the less the NMR believes many more people

would use the service if only they knew about it.

The new gallery is intended to lift a corner on what is available. It will hold exhibitions of the cream of the 7 million photographs while further images can be studied on computer screens.

Visitors will also be able to leave an inquiry to find out what the NMR holds on their town or village.

The gallery, along with the archive itself, is at the heart of exactly the type of much-changed industrial site that the commission has been keen to document.

It is housed in a building dating back to 1842 and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel for the Great Western Railway.

What was once one of the greatest railway works in the country is now mainly devoted to the contemporary obsession with shopping.

The national records centre is hoping that at least some of the 5 million people a year expected at the "Designer Outlet Village" will turn away from the smart shops long enough to discover something of England's past.

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Fit for a queen: Des Whittle of English Heritage smooths down the covers in the Bedchamber of Lady Suffolk, mistress to King George II, at Marble Hill House, Twickenham, which has recently been refurbished with damask curtains from a design at Hampton Court. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Couch potatoes stir in pursuit of higher culture

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

The couch potato is a threatened species, because the British are becoming more cultured and more active.

We are reading books more, visiting the theatre and museums more and watching television less, according to the latest Cultural Trends study by the Policy Studies Institute.

Even the television we are watching is now less likely to be entertainment fodder than it was five years ago. The PSI finds there is now more current affairs and news on television than five years ago.

Since the 1980s, people have cut down on their television viewing. In 1985, people watched an average of 27.1 hours of television per week, but this has fallen to 25.2 hours. At the same time, 77 per cent of the population buys books - the same figure as in 1990. But there has been a 2 per cent increase in the number of visits to libraries in the same period.

More than 26 million visits were made to national museums, a rise of more than 3.2 million since 1989. The top

attraction in the country was the British Museum, in London, which had more than 6 million visitors in 1994/95.

The study also shows more people are visiting theatre, opera and ballet productions. Almost 10 million people went to the theatre, 2.5 million attended the opera and 2.9 million the ballet.

However, the type of show attended is changing, despite the success of the Three Tenors and "Nessun Dorma", attendances at classical concerts and performances of jazz and contemporary dance are down. Overall, the number of productions dropped between 1991 and 1995 throughout the UK, while shows like *Riverdance* - *The Show*, are successful enough to move from theatres to home video.

Our obsession with films continues and in the 11 years since the first multiplex opened, cinema attendances have increased by more than 70 per cent.

More than 80 per cent of homes have at least one video cassette recorder and, of the top 20 videos sold, 19 originated in the cinema.

The leading rental video film

is *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, closely followed by Patrick Swayze in *Dirty Dancing* and the Sharon Stone vehicle, *Basic Instinct*. The power of children's tastes is shown by the animated films that are among the most popular bought for home: Disney's *Jungle Book* and its stablemates, *The Lion King* and *Fantasia*.

"We have been reading a great deal about how the pressures of modern life have left many people with less free time and shortened attention spans," said Sara Selwood, a senior fellow of the Policy Studies Institute. "The evidence does not suggest, however, that the competing attention of rival media has led us to dumb down as a society."

"Instead, people are interested in the quality of their leisure time and are finding many more ways to spend it than sitting at home watching television."

"This is particularly true for children and young people, whose interest in reading, film and museums have continued to grow, despite the popular view that they find such activities boring."

## MPs slate punishing jail regime

Patricia Wynn Davies

Prison Service attempts at creating constructive regimes are being placed in jeopardy by rapidly spiralling numbers of inmates, an influential committee of MPs warned yesterday.

Imprisonment is "an extreme and expensive form of punishment which should be used as sparingly as possible", the all-party Commons home affairs select committee said.

If achievements were not to be lost, the incoming government after the election would have to make the rapid increase in prisoner numbers a priority issue, the MPs urged.

They suggested that some categories of offender should be diverted away from the prison system altogether, and called for a review of the extent to which mentally disordered people were being detained in jails instead of receiving the treatment they needed.

In a report distinctly at odds with the Government's preoccupation with punishment, the MPs praised the service's emphasis on decent conditions and purposeful activity for prisoners, but said the Government should go further and seriously consider allowing prisoners to earn the privilege of having televisions in their cells.

Only around 20 jails offer the facility, although not as a regular feature of their regimes, and the idea has received a frosty reception by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

But the MPs insisted: "Television can keep a prisoner occupied (sometimes purposefully, depending on the programme) ... this is an area to which the Government should give further consideration, given the potential of television in cells as a means of contributing to good order in a prison; so long as the availability of television in this way is clearly an earned privilege rather than a right, it may be

that the public would not regard it as an excessive luxury for prisoners."

MPs said that rapidly increasing numbers of prisoners above forecast rates in recent months risked threatening the progress already achieved by the service, whose objective should be regimes which were secure but also "humane and decent" and aimed at rehabilitating offenders.

As at last Friday, the jail population in England and Wales stood at 59,550, a few hundred short of normal capacity and an increase of around 6,000 over the past 12 months.

"We consider that the prevention of prison overcrowding must remain a major priority," the MPs said.

"The situation is very finely balanced and could change - over a short period - from being under control to giving real cause for concern if forecasts of required accommodation or if planned expansions in capacity are frustrated."

On the latter point, the report warns that the building of new jails planned to tackle the impact of tougher sentencing legislation now going through Parliament "may not be so easy" because of public objections to jails being built in their "backyard."

Paul Cavadin, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, an alliance of 33 penal organisations, said the report underestimated the impact of the rising population and budget cuts.

He said: "In prisons throughout the country overcrowding is worsening, prisoners are being confined to their cells for longer periods and education is being severely cut."

"Resources which should be devoted to improving regimes are being squandered instead on coping with rising numbers by makeshift methods which range from prefabricated houseblocks to prison ships."

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## DAILY POEM

Arms and the Boy

By Wilfred Owen

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade  
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;  
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;  
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-heads  
Which long to muzzle in the hearts of lads.  
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth.  
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.  
There lurk on claws behind his fingers supple;  
And God will grow no talons at his heels,  
Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

"Arms and the Boy", first published posthumously in 1920, appears in the Everyman's Poetry selection of work by Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen. The volume is edited - with notes, a critical introduction and chronology - by George Walter (Everyman/J.M.Dent, £2).



## Elderly must pay cost of care, judge rules

Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

Charities warned of a return to the "Poor Law" as a judge ruled yesterday that hard-up councils can make pensioners pay for care home accommodation until their assets run out.

The decision, a second blow for the elderly, follows the House of Lords' ruling last week that local authorities can take into account the amount of resources the elderly and disabled have when providing community home care services for them.

"The cold hard fact is this: Money has now become the overriding issue in the care of older people," said Michael Lake, director general of Help the Aged, which brought yesterday's test case against Seton Metropolitan Borough Council along with care home residents Cyril Finch, 92, and Charlotte Blanchard, 86.

Government guidelines brought in last April say that

people with capital of £10,000 or less should be treated as "unable to pay" for accommodation, but those with between £10,000 and £16,000 should contribute to the costs. People with above £16,000 must meet the whole cost.

Help the Aged complained that Seton Council was unlawfully expecting the elderly to make contributions to their care home until they were down to their last £1,500 - the cost of a funeral.

But the council argued that shortage of money from the Government meant it could not afford to fund the private residential and nursing home fees of those with assets.

In a ruling which will affect local authorities nationwide, Mr Justice Howitt ruled that the authority was acting within its powers and was entitled to take into account its own resources when assessing needs.

He distinguished Mr Finch's case from that of Mrs Blanchard however. Mr Finch's place at

The Glade rest home in Birkdale, Southport, had been funded from the start by the local authority and had only later been withdrawn when his capital went above £16,000.

When his care home bills again reduced his resources to below £16,000, the council had applied its £1,500 threshold policy and refused to make any further contributions. Mr Justice Howitt said the council's stance in the case of Mr Finch, a diabetic widower, had been "unlawful" and ordered it to restore the contributions.

But Mrs Blanchard, who suffers from severe memory loss, had paid her own care home bills at the Warren Park Nursing Home, Blundellsands, Liverpool. When she sought a community care assessment, the council refused to help until her savings had fallen below £16,000. Yesterday the court ruled that the council had no duty to arrange accommodation for her because they were entitled to take into account her

remaining savings and her own resources.

Help the Aged's head of planning, Tessa Harding, said: "This judgment blows a hole through community care policy and makes government assurances to older people meaningless. It takes us straight back to the Poor Law."

Jean Gould, project solicitor for the Public Law Project, warned that the decision nullified last year's regulation. "This ruling will mean that local authorities will be able to refuse to arrange to provide residential care for the elderly solely because they have a little money in the bank."

Sally Greengross, director of Age Concern England, said: "The reality of this means that local authorities have an open door to avoid funding care for older people who have no savings or assets. The problem remains. There is simply not enough money to provide all the services that old people need."

## Flagship East Coast line fails to run trains on time

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Four out of 10 trains on the fastest train line in Britain are not running on time, according to leaked company figures.

Great North Eastern Railway, which runs the high-speed link between London and Edinburgh, has previously trumpeted a 3 per cent improvement in punctuality, but has yet to meet the demanding targets set out in the company's passenger charter.

The railway's internal "Team Brief" document describes the

performance as "disappointing" and says that in a "critical period" after Christmas, performance targets were met on just two days.

According to the briefing, passengers waiting for a train on the high-speed line over a four-month period from October last year found that only 62.5 per cent of services ran on time.

But under the passenger charter - which allows season ticket holders to be able to claim refunds for poor performance - GNER is allowed to claim that

services within 10 minutes of their arrival or departure time

are "on time". Even with the extra leeway, GNER did not meet its charter targets of 90 per cent.

In the two months from December last year, the company managed only 82.8 per cent under the passenger charter - which excludes delays caused by crime, vandalism and poor weather.

However, railway pressure groups said that the "flagship route should be delivering a premium service."

Jonathan Bray, a spokesman for Save Our Railways, said: "This railway benefited from £500m of investment prior to its

sell-off. Passengers expect, and are entitled, to a better performance."

A GNER spokesman said: "Under the industry measure performance has got better." The 12 months up to March GNER says that using the charter measure 89.9 per cent trains were on time - much better than the industry average.

The company is also planning to buy five new tilting trains to increase journey times and overhaul all rolling stock to summer to improve train reliability.

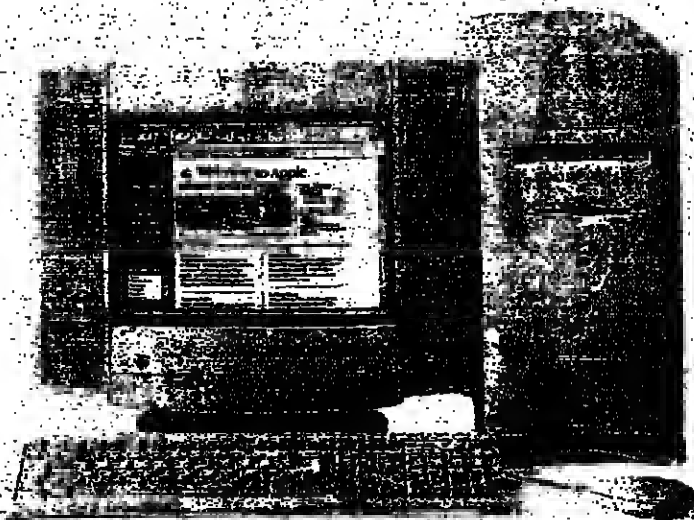


Seasonal shoppers: A model sheltering beneath one of the designer Frederick Fox's new pastel-coloured straw cartwheel hats in Cavendish Square, central London, yesterday. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

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80/36



# Hong Kong handover

## Cantonese teaching to replace English

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Not only the British are leaving Hong Kong this year but the government plans to phase out teaching in the English language.

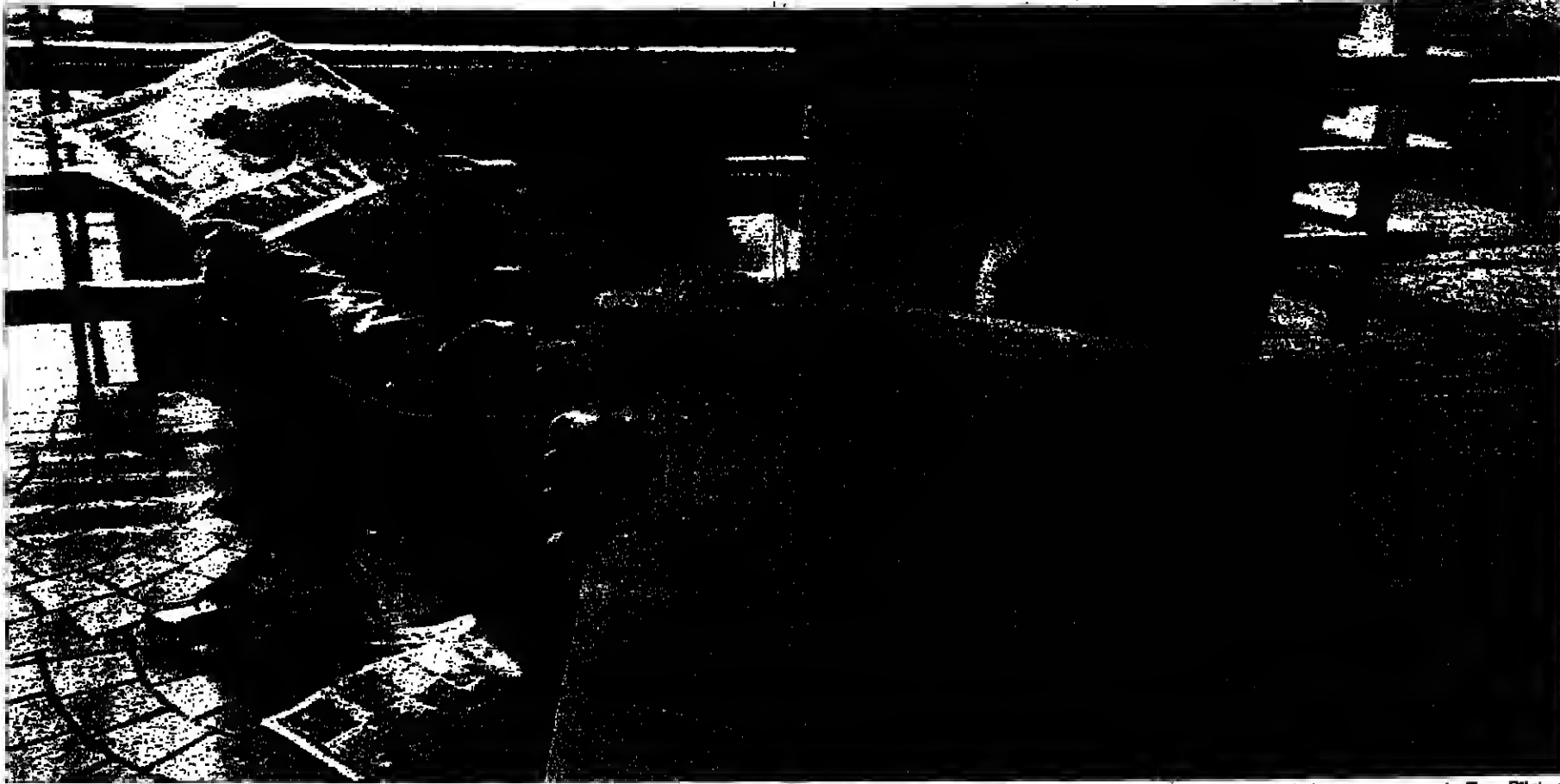
Remarkably, over 80 per cent of the colony's secondary schools claim to use English as the medium of instruction. The problem is that many of the teachers are not proficient in English and lack the ability to conduct a lesson in the language.

"We understand," says Chong Kwok-kit, the assistant director of education, "that a lot of schools which claim to use the English medium are actually teaching in Chinese except that they use English text books. Even exam papers are in Chinese or bilingual".

Although most children emerge from these schools barely able to speak English, their parents appear to be convinced that they will only be able to secure good career prospects by attending English language schools. Tik Chi-yuen, chairman of the Home-School Cooperation group, believes that parents of half the children in English language schools would be inclined to withdraw their offspring if they move over to the Chinese language medium.

However, Mr Chong says that one of the aims of the switch is to improve English standards and provide more resources for English teaching. He says: "A lot of research shows that most students learn more effectively with mother-tongue teaching".

As matters stand, schoolchildren are falling between two stools," says Ted Pryde, the director of the British Council's English Language Centre. They are neither proficient in English nor Chinese. He is a strong sup-



Informed choice: Locals reading Cantonese language newspapers in Kowloon. The new education system will place more emphasis on the dialect. Photograph: Tom Pilsten

porter of reversion to mother-tongue teaching which he predicts will raise the standard of English in Hong Kong, as long as resources are provided to support the teaching effort. Mr Pryde says that in the past an elite possessed a high standard of

English language proficiency but it proved impossible to replicate this standard as the education system went through massive expansion. Moreover, the needs of the economy changed as Hong Kong's economy gravitated towards the service

sector where English skills were in high demand. Mr Chong says the government keeps hearing complaints from employers about their inability to find staff with sufficient English language proficiency. This has sparked a

long debate about whether English standards are falling. Examination results show this is not the case. Mr Pryde believes that the real issue is great expansion of the population, bringing an inevitable dilution of English-speaking ability.

There have been suggestions that the dropping of English-medium education is part of the process of pleasing the incoming Chinese administration. Mr Chong says this is not so. He says that plans for the switch have been underway for a

decade and that schools have been keen to make the change but were fearful of parental backlash if they proceeded alone.

Ironically, the first group to complain about the new policy was China's Preparatory Committee, which, not for the first time, was angered by a government decision taken without China's blessing.

The new system will place a firm emphasis on Cantonese, the local language, which China regards as a dialect. In China, all schools are supposed to teach in Putunghua, the northern language, which is the national language. Very few Hong Kong schools use Putunghua as the medium of instruction nor are there plans for them to do so. Language is a sensitive issue in Hong Kong because China seems to see the prevalence of Cantonese as part of a process of establishing a separate Hong Kong identity. Chinese fears are not without foundation, because the use of Cantonese and the development of a modern Cantonese culture have helped to foster a separate identity in the colony.

Nevertheless, Hong Kong is anxious to maintain its position as an international business centre and those hoping to benefit from this situation realise that they need to be equipped with English proficiency.

Mr Pryde says Hong Kong people have shown their commitment to education and determination to reach targets established to improve English standards. Ironically, the scrapping of English-medium education might end up improving English standards as school students concentrate on learning English as a foreign language rather than frowning their way through lessons in English which are barely comprehensible.

## Gore vows not to let gift row sour ties with China

Gresa Poole  
eking

The investigation into alleged illegal campaign contributions by China would not derail improved Sino-US relations, the American Vice-President, Al Gore, said yesterday. But he added: "Should the allegations be proven to be true, then of course that would be a different matter. And I made it clear that would be serious indeed."

Winding up two days in eking, he continued to be ogged by the controversy. He

said it had not been discussed in yesterday's meeting with President Jiang Zemin, but had been raised by the Prime Minister, Li Peng, on Tuesday. "Mr Li repeated the strong denial by China that the allegations are true. I then said the US views these allegations as very serious. However, they are the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation, within our Justice Department, and it is premature to speculate on what the outcome of the investigation is."

Asked if his trip to China at this juncture would affect his

political future, Mr Gore, the presumed front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2000, said: "That is for others to judge. I am not looking at it in that context."

The Washington Post has reported that the FBI told six members of Congress last year that they had been targeted by China to receive illegal campaign funds from foreign corporations.

Yesterday Mr Gore preferred to dwell on more positive aspects of his trip, the highest-level visit by a US politician since the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. Issues raised included arms pro-



Al and Tipper Gore: Scandal over funds has dogged visit

Washington in the run-up to the annual debate on renewing China's most-favoured nation trading status. The next few months will also focus on preparing for Mr Jiang's summit in Washington with President Bill Clinton, expected in November. The US trade deficit with China - \$39.5bn last year - will feature prominently in relations this year.

Yesterday Mr Gore said he "did not pull any punches" in raising the "still serious and systemic obstacles to greater access for American companies" to the Chinese market.

Today Mr Gore and his wife, Tipper, are in fly in Xian to see the terracotta warriors. The Vice-President leaves China for Seoul tomorrow.

The day after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, May Law, 35, a Hong Kong born Chinese marketing executive with a large American-based company, and the rest of her family, joined the queues outside the Canadian consulate to apply for immigration visas.

"Of course we were motivated by all the unrest in China at the time," she says. Seven years on, she feels very differently about leaving Hong Kong.

Last year she got married and this year gave birth to a baby girl. The family are determined to stay in Hong Kong and have sufficient confidence in the future to have invested their savings in the territory. Next week they are moving into a new flat.

The incoming government needs to win the hearts and minds of people like May Law, people with the option of going. What she says is very much in line with findings of the opinion surveys recording growing confidence in Hong Kong's future.

Canada's ponderous immigration bureaucracy worked to May Law's advantage. "It gave us time to think, and now we see that things seem to have settled down." She observes the new government being put in place and the new order taking shape. "We know it's not going to be all wonderful and not very democratic but it's something we can live with as long as we're not

## Stephen Vines talks to an executive who has opted for life under Peking rule

involved in politics. I can't see the changes affecting our daily lives." She can see some benefits. She works for a company likely to be able to expand its activities. Her husband, a doctor, looks set to take in new patients from the Chinese mainland.

Not only are they staying but so is their money. "We're taking a very big risk," she says, "because all our money is tied up in property in Hong Kong."

They have thought seriously about hedging their bets but decided to stick with the market they know best and maintain investments they can manage themselves rather than rely on friends and services overseas.

The decision to stay is influenced by economics. "If the economy stays as good as it is, we'll be lucky," she says, "we shouldn't be too greedy to hope for more."

So what is the downside? Like most Hong Kong people, Ms Law is concerned about corruption. "I don't want us to become another Philippines. If we get that kind of reputation, foreign investors will lose confidence." However, she thinks that corruption is "something one lives with. I'm certain there's an amount of corruption

everywhere, even in England, but society can adjust to it. We Chinese are very adaptable. Things may change in the way business is done but we will adapt and thrive."

It would take unrest on the scale of Hong Kong's 1960s riots to shake Ms Law's confidence in staying put. "If ever I find my friends being jailed and not getting a fair trial, that will really bother me," she says.

Originally she was not too keen on the idea of the colony reverting to Chinese rule. Now she feels differently. "Chinese people being ruled by Chinese people makes more sense than being ruled by the British," she says. "Even though the Chinese have proved not to be so great at government, we should give them a chance because they are of our own kind."

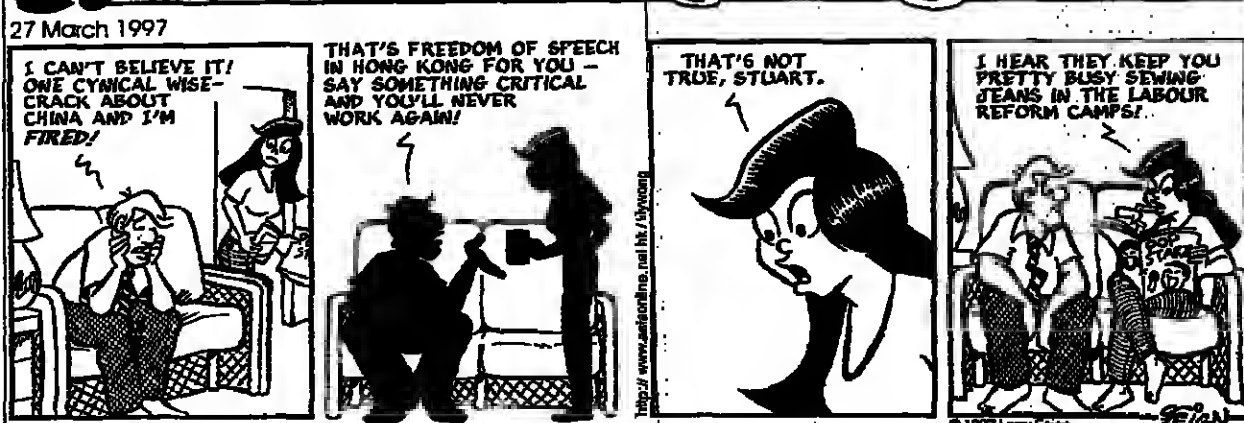
Moreover, she sees Hong Kong parting company with a society on the way down whereas "we seem to be going with something on the way up".

### CUT THE BOTHER



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### The World of Lily Wong



### CUT LOOSE



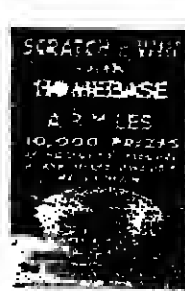
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# Papua PM forced to resign as army leader wins their battle of wits

Michael Ashworth

Brigadier General Jerry Singirok has achieved what he set out to when he demanded that the Papua New Guinea Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, resign over the employment of mercenaries to solve the 11-year conflict on the island of Bougainville.

Yesterday, Sir Julius and two of his ministers—Deputy Prime Minister Chris Haiveta and Defence Minister Mathias Ijape—stepped down to await the outcome of the judicial inquiry into the Sandline contract. The chief executive of Sandline, Tim Spicer, has been subpoenaed to give evidence at the inquiry.

News of Sir Julius's departure was greeted with a huge roar of approval by thousands of protesters and soldiers loyal to General Singirok who were besieging the parliament building. As Sir Julius spoke, an army helicopter could be heard buzzing the building. Protesters cheered and lifted soldiers into the air. Dropping their chants of "Chan resign!", they began to sing the national anthem.

To many, the General is seen as a martyr, his stance one of

principle adopted out of concern for the soldiers in his force (the PNGDF) and the "people of Papua New Guinea". But his past actions and early involvement suggest other motives. He was desperate for the capability and morale of his army to be improved. Poorly led, ill-disciplined and suffering from a deep-seated malaise over the years of defeats by the rag-tag rebel army, the situation was reaching crisis point.



Forced out: Sir Julius Chan stepping down yesterday

Amnesty International had accused it of human rights abuses and with a general election due, there was increasing pressure for the government to sort out the defence force and solve the Bougainville problem.

General Singirok's attempts to crush the rebel leadership were met by catastrophic failure. Operation High Speed 2, designed to "decapitate the rebel leadership", was a disaster and resulted in the capture of five PNGDF soldiers, who are still being held by the rebels. Furthermore, the \$10m (£5.25m) put aside for the week-long op-

eration (one-quarter of the Sandline contract) provoked a public outcry. When the military failed to justify the funds, the government appointed an audit team to investigate. It is yet to publish the results.

In short, the reputation of the General and the army was at its lowest ebb for years.

The first port of call for assistance was Papua New Guinea's old master and largest trading partner, Australia. But Canberra was reluctant to get involved in what it saw as another Vietnam, and - with an eye on public opinion - would not have been happy working with an army with a poor record on human rights and discipline. With no other assistance forthcoming, Sir Julius claimed: "I had no choice but to go to the private sector."

Negotiations began with the London-based security company Sandline International last year in London, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. As the minutes and paperwork show, General Singirok was a principal negotiator from the start. When talks started to filter over funding, he made a personal representation to Sir Julius to endorse the contract.

Over Christmas and the new year, Mr Spicer completed a strategic assessment, development plan and strategy. It was on the basis of this and the past success of Sandline's sub-contractor, the South African-based Executive Outcomes, in assisting the peace process in Sierra Leone, that Sir Julius gave the deal the green light.

The three-month contract was signed last January and was worth \$36m, of which 80 per cent was to be spent on equipment and weaponry for the PNGDF. Sandline's mandate was to provide specialist military training for counter-insurgency teams that would "harass the rebel patrols and deny them freedom of movement", a company spokesman said. Sandline personnel would also be placed within the command and control hierarchy of the special forces unit.

Three days before General Singirok's "address to the nation" that instigated the crisis in PNG, the first phase of the initial training package was complete.

The reasons for the General's volte-face on 17 March, when he turned on Sir Julius, demanding that he quit and expel the mercenaries, are surprising considering his early involvement in the contract. His claim that he could not see such vast sums of money spent on mercenaries when the PNGDF was badly equipped and poorly paid, strikes hollow when his spending on previous operations is considered. Of the funds paid to Sandline, \$28.5m was spent on equipment for the defence force. The \$7.5m spent on Sandline for the three-months was less than he spent in a week during High Speed 2.

It is true that the employment of Sandline puts General Singirok into an increasingly difficult position with his own army. Due to the shroud of secrecy over the contract, there was and still is a great deal of ignorance of what part Sandline was to play. Many assumed it was a simple "cash-for-hired-killer" deal. Little mention was made of the equipment and training. To many senior officers not party to the details of the arrangement, the employment of Sandline signified a lack of faith and commitment by the government in their capability. As commander of the de-



Welcome news: Soldiers in Port Moresby yesterday celebrating after hearing of the change of government

Photograph: Michael Bowers/Reuters

fence force, the General was aware of these problems. He was also aware of rumours that Sir Julius was looking to move him from his position. After two disastrous military blunders,

one of which was being investigated for financial irregularities, and with a general deterioration of discipline and morale in the army, Sir Julius increasingly thought of his de-

fence force commander as a political liability. General Singirok was a symbol of what the PNGDF used to be, not what Sir Julius thought it was going to be.

On seeing his position and status undermined and believing that he was about to be moved sideways, General Singirok managed in one left move to turn the tables on the

Prime Minister. He capitalised on the general feeling of discontent in the army and gave his soldiers an opportunity to vent their considerable frustration on the government.

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## Galtieri faces life of an exile in his own land

Phil Davison  
Latin America Correspondent

Leopoldo Galtieri, the Argentine military leader who invaded the Falkland Islands, is unlikely to serve time for his part in the "dirty war" of the 1970s. But he appears condemned to internal exile in Argentina for the rest of his years.

An international warrant for his arrest, for "creating a state of terror and genocide," was welcomed by most Argentines as at least a symbolic victory for human rights and for the rule of law. It was the first time a person "disappeared" by the military from 1976 to 1983. Although he has been granted amnesty in Argentina, the warrant means he could be arrested in any other country.

A Spanish judge, Baltasar Garçon, ordered Gen Galtieri's arrest via Interpol over the disappearance of several hundred Spaniards in Argentina during the "dirty war". Specifically, Judge Garçon held him responsible for the deaths of Victor Labrador and his two sons in 1976.

Gen Galtieri, 71, was army commander in Santa Fe province at the time. He led the military junta 1980-82, his in-

vasion of the Falklands led to his downfall. With other military chiefs he was arrested by President Carlos Menem in 1989 under the "Full-Stop Law", which absolved them of human-rights violations.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, who won the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize for his fight against the generals, said the warrant was "a victory against impunity."

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who have fought for 20 years for news of their "disappeared" loved ones, also welcomed the news. "We think it's fantastic that the world is starting to prosecute these killers," said their leader, Hebe de Bonafini.

She said that her group planned to file charges in Italy soon against Pio Laghi, who was papal nuncio in Argentina in the 1970s.

Gen Galtieri joins the former navy captain Alfredo Astiz on the list of Argentines wanted abroad.

Astiz, known as "the Blond Angel", is wanted in France and Sweden in connection with the murder of citizens from those countries.

He has been sentenced in France, *in absentia*, to life imprisonment.



16

international

# British arms help Jakarta fight war against its own people



**Sue Lloyd-Roberts, BBC Special Correspondent, exposes the trade that gives the Indonesian regime the muscle to clamp down on dissent**

In April 1996, the students of the University of Ujung Pandang in South Sulawesi, one of 3,000 islands that make up Indonesia, demonstrated against a 67 per cent increase in transport costs. Many live 10 miles or more from the city and the increase threatened to curtail their university careers. "It was a peaceful demonstration of a practical, non-political nature", recalls Ardito. "We could hardly believe it when the army intervened. It was like they had declared war." They drove British-made armoured personnel carriers armed with guns onto the campus, the guns were fired and three students were killed in the ensuing panic.

Forty days later, on the day of mourning dictated by Islam, students from the University of Bandung in Java commemorated the deaths of their colleagues in Ujung Pandang. This time the paramilitary police drove British-made armoured water cannon onto the campus and sprayed the students with an ammonium solution. The water cannon were part of batch of nine exported to Indonesia in 1995. Dozens of students suffered skin burns.

The students say they envy Britain's reputation for democratic values and human rights. "I do not believe that Western countries, like Britain, supply these weapons to be used against the people", says Subiko, a student injured in the Bandung demonstration. "I am sure the Indonesian Government told the British they would use them only for the defence of Indonesia."

The Stop Arms to Indonesia Campaign this week failed in their bid in the High Court to force a judicial review in UK arms sales to Indonesia. Mr Justice Laws never questioned the evidence cited above. He said the case was "misconceived", because it is a political, not a legal issue, and cannot be set-

tled in the courts. The campaigners are angry. "It means there is no means in this country to challenge a government that sends arms to repressive regimes," says Carmel Budiardjo of Tapol, the Indonesian Human Rights campaign.

The Government says it adheres strictly to the criteria laid down by the DTI on arms export controls, and that in issuing licences, it "avoids contributing to internal repression and instability within the country of destination and avoids contributing to human rights abuses".

The arms campaigners argue that the Government position is riddled with casuistry and contradiction. On 27 July last year there was the worst rioting in Jakarta for over 20 years when Government forces stormed the party headquarters of the PDI, one of two opposition parties, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the Indonesian's first post-independence president.

While police viciously beat PDI supporters, British-built water cannon sprayed the demonstrators with pink dye, so



Riot police in Bandung. The vehicle behind them carries a British-made water cannon. Photograph: Sue Lloyd-Roberts

unacceptable." But at the end of last year, the Government announced new export licences for weapons to Indonesia, including more than 300 armoured cars and water cannon.

Indonesian police are introduced to the latest in British riot control equipment when they

hardware, including the British imports, on the streets of Jakarta in February this year, one of the government-controlled newspapers reported that "troops, supported by scores of armoured vehicles and British-made Scorpion tanks, helicopters, motorcycles and other vehicles will assure security and order during the elections in the Greater Jakarta area."

There are to be no rallies or public meetings during these elections, in which the opposition parties are strictly controlled by the Government. With the memory of last July still vivid, neither opposition party is expected to misbehave.

Reports of heavy-handed tactics used by security forces in the rest of Indonesia are nothing compared to the treatment meted out to occupied East Timor. At the weekend, two protesters were killed, dozens were injured and 60 arrested in the capital, Dili, for attempting to air their grievances to a visiting UN delegate.

These figures are the official ones; the reality is likely to be

higher. These new deaths bring to well over 200,000 the number of Timorese killed since Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 - a third of the population.

Among the East Timorese, the British Aerospace Hawk fighter plane has become a symbol of the worse excesses carried out on the island. Kosis Santana, leader of the East Timorese resistance army, claims British planes were responsible for killing hundreds in bombing raids carried out against villages which supported them in the late Seventies and Eighties. Mr Santana believes that "the war in East Timor would have taken another course if the Indonesians had not received military support from abroad, including the

Hawks that Great Britain offered during the crucial period after the invasion."

He says the Indonesian air force no longer uses British jet fighters for bombing missions, but for intimidation, because the "Hawks killed so many people in bombing attacks in 1978 and 1979 that today, whenever people hear the noise of the Hawks flying, they are scared and the authorities know they will not dare leave their homes."

Defeated in the High Court this week, the arms campaigners are now arguing for a change in the law.

Sue Lloyd-Roberts' report on British arms sales to Indonesia can be seen on *Newsnight* tonight at 10.30pm on BBC2.

## significant shorts

### Stalin finds favour in former Soviet republic

President Alexander Lukashenko of moved further to tighten his rule in this former Soviet republic and said people were asking him to introduce a dictatorship similar to Stalin's. "People are saying 'Give us Stalin's times'," he said in a television broadcast. Having already restored Soviet symbols, he promised to revive the Soviet tradition of *subbotniks* - unpaid mandatory labour on weekends, mostly in street cleaning. **Letters, page 19**  
**AP - Minsk**

### Israel likened to apartheid SA

The UN investigator on torture likened Israel to South Africa under apartheid and accused it of institutionalising torture in interrogating Palestinian detainees. Nigel Rodley, a British lawyer who serves as UN special rapporteur on torture, issued his annual report listing 29 countries where torture was fairly extensive. They included Algeria, Bahrain, Burma, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkey. **Reuters - Geneva**

### Oz's exclusive new party

The politician Pauline Hanson, who created a storm last year with attacks on Asian immigration and Aboriginal welfare, is forming her own party, called "Pauline Hanson's One Nation". Her choice of the name "One Nation" was derided. "Well, at least it wasn't 'Ein Reich,'" said the Labor leader, Kim Beazley. "So we have got to be grateful for small mercies." **Reuters - Canberra**

### Beady look at diabetes

People with diabetes might be able to take insulin in pills rather than shots, using an approach in which the drug is put into tiny plastic beads, a study in mice suggests. The approach might also help scientists plant genes in people to treat disease, researchers said. Normally, insulin taken by mouth would be destroyed by digestive juices and not absorbed by the intestine. The mouse experiments used plastic beads smaller than the width of a human hair. The beads protected the insulin and delivered it to the bloodstream. The insulin escaped as the plastic disintegrated. **AP - New York**

### Property boom

A US property company is to invest \$100m (£62m) in a project to build a mini-suburb outside Moscow, a breakthrough in a city dominated by grim apartment buildings. It is seen as a sign of improving Western confidence in the Moscow market. **AP - Moscow**

### New species trots out

A so-called lost world on the border between Vietnam and Laos has yielded another new species of animal. This one a primitive pig, *Sus bucculentus*, which was only distantly related to other pigs in the region, said Colin Grove of the Australian National University in Canberra. **Reuters - London**

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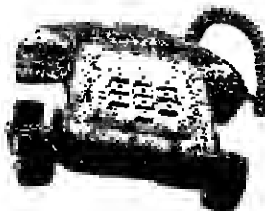
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# PLO turn backs on American mediation

Patrick Cockburn  
Jerusalem

As the United States begins to mediate between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Dennis Ross, the US chief negotiator, is to see Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, in Morocco today and then fly on to Israel to see Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister.

Palestinian leaders fear Mr Ross will try to put pressure on them to arrest members of Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation, following last week's suicide bombing, without getting Israel to stop building at Har Homa, the new Jewish settlement in Jerusalem, called Jabal Abu Ghneim by Palestinians.

Saeed Erekat, a top Palestinian negotiator, said: "If he [Mr Ross] is coming to practice his usual habit of arranging a high level meeting, I predict the failure of his mission."



Dennis Ross: Blamed for failings of Hebron accord

Marwan Barghout, the leader of Fatah, Mr Arafat's political movement, on the West Bank, added that Mr Ross should not come if he was going to put pressure on Mr Arafat "to crack down on Palestinians while the bulldozers will continue." He predicted more suicide attacks.

Mr Netanyahu is hoping to win American support, despite Washington's anger over his decision to build at Har Homa, by insisting that Mr Arafat "gave the green light" for last Friday's suicide bomb.

Gen Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the Israeli chief of staff, also insists Mr Arafat covertly gave the signal to Hamas, though he admits Israel does not know for certain who was behind the attack which killed three women and injured 61 people.

The crisis has boosted the much talked of option of Mr Netanyahu forming a national unity government with Labour. Shimon Peres, the former prime minister, defeated last year, favours the idea, but it is regarded with scepticism by Ehud Barak, likely to be Labour's next leader. Although the idea is backed by the US, Mr Netanyahu has probably not decided to try a coalition, but finds it a useful stick with which to threaten dissident members of his cabinet and his own party.

It is not clear how Mr Ross will proceed in his mediation. By going on an extended political tour during the present crisis, Mr Arafat has signalled



Wounded: A Palestinian carrying a boy hurt in clashes with Israeli soldiers in Ramallah yesterday Photograph: Reuters

that he feels he is in a strong position. The US State Department apparently had difficulty locating him in Bangladesh in order to arrange his meeting with Mr Ross in Rabat today.

Dr Khalil Shikaki, a leading Palestinian political scientist, says Mr Ross and his team were responsible for the vagueness of the Hebron accord in January, which led to Israel building at Har Homa and to offering to make only a limited withdrawal on the West Bank.

Mr Netanyahu says the real struggle is not over Har Homa but over the existence of Israel. "The real struggle that is aimed against us is not about Har Homa, but about our sovereignty in Jerusalem, and in the end, about our sovereignty in Jaffa and Ramat Aviv," he said.

Although the government is not directly accusing Mr Arafat of knowing about the suicide bomb, the allegations sound increasingly like those made before the Oslo accords in 1993.

Moshe Peled, the Deputy Education Minister, says Israeli intelligence has evidence that Mr Arafat had prior knowledge of the bomb attack on the World Trade Center in New York four years ago. "More than that, he was part of the discussions on the operation," says Mr Peled. "I call on the prime minister to give the information to the Americans, so they'll know who they're dealing with."

There are signs that the US has moved towards the Israeli position that Mr Arafat gave the green light for the suicide attack, although in practice, the accusation is rather that he did not take measures to prevent it.

There were sporadic stone-throwings by Palestinians on the West Bank yesterday in Hebron, Bethlehem and Ramallah. But the next test of strength will be

on Sunday when Palestinians hold an annual day of demonstrations called "Land Day" to commemorate the shooting dead of six Israeli Arabs by Israeli border police in 1976 and to protest against Israeli land confiscations. Fatah leaders insist Palestinian anger over Har Homa is so strong that it would be impossible for Mr Arafat to stop demonstrations or crack down on Hamas.

Colombo (AP) — Mr Arafat surprised his Sri Lankan hosts at a state banquet by pulling out his pistol. While chatting with President Chandrika Kumaratunga, a leader of a former Tamil rebel group jeeringly asked the Palestinian leader: "Do you still carry a pistol as you did when you went to the UN?" A grinning Arafat pulled out a pistol and showed it to them.

# Bonn forces Bosnians to return home

Imre Karacs  
Bonn  
Stacy Sullivan  
Sarajevo

Shrugging off protest from human rights groups, German officials said yesterday that they would step up expulsions of Bosnian refugees.

Until now, less than 100 adults, childless couples and criminals have been sent back to former Yugoslavia, but "Phase 2" of the repatriation is about to begin.

On 1 May the authorities will start deporting about 100,000 of 315,000 refugees in Germany. "Those who do not leave voluntarily must reckon with being sent by force," said Gerhard Glogowski, interior minister of Lower Saxony yesterday.

On Tuesday, Germany deported 41 Bosnians. Though several on the plane were convicted criminals, most were ordinary people who fled the war in Bosnia. Many were crying as they stepped off the chartered plane at Sarajevo airport.

Jusuf and Sadhera Nukic were sound asleep in their room in a German boarding house in Altona on Tuesday morning when the police pounded on the door and told them they had 15 minutes to pack before being deported to their native Bosnia. "They came in and yelled 'Raus, you must leave now,'" said Mrs Nukic who passed out from fear.

Given Germany's history and the fact that it is still unsafe for many of the refugees to return to Bosnia, few thought that the Germans would make good on their threats.

Mrs Nukic, who still had her pyjamas on underneath her clothes, broke down as she entered Sarajevo airport. "Where will we go now?" she asked.

The Nukics are Muslims from Janja, a village now in Serb-held territory. They were expelled by Bosnian Serbs in September 1994 after managing to survive in Serb-held territory for more than two years. The couple went to Germany to join their son and daughter who had fled two years earlier. When their residence papers expired last month, they said they asked

the German authorities what they should do and were told to wait. "We told them that if we had a place to go back to, we would go back on our own, but we don't have a place to go," said Mr Nukic.

The Nukics' chances of ever going back to Janja are slim. Since the Dayton peace treaty was signed in November 1995, more Muslims and Croats have been expelled from Serb territory than have returned.

Officials from the UN High Commission for Refugees in Sarajevo were furious. "A deportation of Muslims from Republika Srpska [the Bosnian Serb entity] who have nowhere to go is the worst kind of deportation that there is," said Kris Janowski, a UNHCR spokesman.

"We have asked the German government to continue to

Sending them back means Germany has accepted ethnic cleansing

provide temporary protection to this group of people, but apparently they have not listened."

Human rights groups and Germany's Green party accuse officials of "heartlessness". Tilman Zuleh, head of the German section of the Society for Threatened Peoples, says only about 15 per cent of the refugees in Germany have somewhere to go.

Many have no home to return to, and their homeland has fallen into the hands of a hostile ethnic authority. Muslims whose villages are now under Croat or Serbian control are forced to find shelter in an area run by the Muslim government. "Sending them back implies that Germany accepts 'ethnic cleansing'," Mr Zuleh says. Up to 30,000 refugees have returned voluntarily, but many did so out of fear of "going home in chains".

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18

international

# Turkish taunt to EU enrages allies in Bonn

Tony Barber  
Europe Editor

The European Union's relations with Turkey plunged into fresh trouble yesterday after an almost farcical diplomatic row between Germany and Turkey over a perceived Turkish insult to the EU.

Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, told members of his ruling Welfare Party on Tuesday that EU leaders should "bow their heads" when visiting Turkey because of their failure to implement in full the terms of an EU-Turkish customs accord.

The remark infuriated Germany's Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, who was about to fly to Ankara to improve EU-Turkish relations. After coming close to cancelling his trip, he finally set off from Rome two hours late on Tuesday evening.

Speaking to German reporters in Ankara yesterday morning, Mr Kinkel could not have made it plainer that Mr Erbakan's comments still rankled. "No European will have to bow their head to Turkey in shame," he huffed.

The decline in EU-Turkish relations this year owes its origins partly to growing Turkish indignation about the EU's failure to carry out all aspects of the customs agreement, which came into effect last year. Millions of pounds in EU aid to Turkey, designed to help it overcome the initial effects of the customs union, have been

blocked by Greece, Turkey's traditional rival, which shows no sign of relaxing its stance.

Turkey's hackles were also raised by a recent suggestion from the leaders of several EU Christian Democrat parties that, as an Islamic country, Turkey should never be allowed into the EU. For their part, some European governments were annoyed by Turkey's threat to block NATO expansion into Central Europe unless Turkey got its way on EU membership.

The row between Mr Kinkel and Mr Erbakan was a measure of how badly frayed EU-Turkish relations have become, since the German minister would normally be counted among those keen to cultivate closer ties. Even after yesterday's dispute, he was at pains to say: "Turkey belongs to Europe. The Turkish train remains on the main track, it will not be put on the side track."

However, he said human rights abuses, the Kurdish civil war in south-east Turkey and tensions in the Turkish-Greek relationship meant Turkey was not yet a suitable candidate for EU membership.

These difficulties, coupled with Turkey's large, expanding population and relative economic underdevelopment, make it likely that former Communist states, such as the Czech Republic and Poland, will join the EU before Turkey, although the Turks have been associate EU members since 1963.

Mr Erbakan's views on the EU have often seemed shaped by a desire less to join the club than to damn it as the bane of Turkish life. Before taking office last year as prime minister, he denounced the EU customs union as a form of "slavery to the Christian establishment".

His Foreign Minister, Tansu Ciller, of the conservative True Path party, is far more pro-European. But differences of style and political opinion between Mr Erbakan and Mrs Ciller have not improved the coherence of Turkish foreign policy.

German views on Turkey are influenced by the presence of 2 million Turks in Germany at a time when unemployment is at its highest level since the 1930s. Few politicians wish to court voters' wrath by supporting Turkish membership of the EU, which would imply an opportunity for millions more Turks to seek jobs in Germany.



Veiled belief: Nazarenes wearing traditional hoods bring an eerie element to pre-Easter religious enactments in Seville yesterday. Images of Christ and the saints feature in the processions in the Spanish city during Semana Santa, or Easter Week. Photograph: AFP

## Yeltsin tries to check tide of discontent as strikes loom

Phil Reeves  
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin and his new government yesterday mounted a eleventh-hour attempt to soothe a discontented population in the hope of dampening down the impact of a wave of strikes and demonstrations which are planned across Russia today.

The trial which now heads the reshuffled government – the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and his youthful new deputies, Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov – chose the eve of the one-day national strike to reassure the public that their myriad economic problems will be tackled.

In particular, Mr Chernomyrdin pledged that a start would be made in settling billions of dollars worth of wages and pensions arrears – one of the country's deepest sources of anger and division, and the driving force behind today's industrial action.

**In Moscow alone, 16,000 police, including riot squads, will be deployed**

Mr Yeltsin, a veteran political stuntman, weighed in with a nationwide radio address defending his performance at last week's Helsinki summit, which has been criticised as a sell-out by his Communist and nationalist foes. In a separate move, he also announced that he will take personal charge of reforming Russia's armed forces. And he fired off a blatantly populist decree banning government workers from using foreign cars for official business. Even the Kremlin's fattest cats will be forced to auction off their beloved Mercedes and BMWs and replace them with Russian-produced vehicles, setting the stage for a return to the black Zis and Volgas which swept party apparatchiks around Moscow during the Soviet era.

Mass strikes in Russia tend to produce unwarranted alarmist warnings of unrest, but yesterday's theatrical flurry by the leadership suggests that the Kremlin is concerned about today's events. Trade union

leaders claim that up to 20 million people will go on strike at almost 30,000 different enterprises, ranging from heavy industrial plants to coal mines. In Moscow alone, where several large protests are planned, the city authorities say 16,000 police will be on the streets, including riot squads.

Yesterday, Mr Chernomyrdin underlined the mood of general unease by issuing an appeal for calm, which he combined with an attempt to assure the world that his new administration is a caring, sharing one, which is deeply concerned about the long-suffering Russian public and its unpaid wages.

"We see this problem, we feel and understand this problem," he said, before urging people not to get "carried away by emotion and provocations". He continued: "You see, there exist forces that want to rock the boat, that want to use this normal action ... to aggravate the situation in the country. I can say once again that nobody will benefit from this."

Certainly, most Russians have good reason for outrage. The country's wage and pension arrears have risen to \$8.8bn (£5.5bn); factories across the nation's 11 time zones stand idle and often derelict; millions have seen their savings wiped out by inflation or fraudulent pyramid investment schemes; health and education services have been collapsing steadily since Russia first embarked on reforms in 1992, while other social blights – from disease to corruption and crime – have been multiplying. Today, the government will be hoping that apathy and cold weather will help stifle many of the cries of anguish. In much of Russia, the idea of going on strike is considered pointless as many of the industries are already at a standstill.

But Mr Chernomyrdin and his free-marketisers also have more concrete solutions to Russia's economic crisis. Yesterday, the Prime Minister reeled off a list of planned reforms – including overhauling the tax code, regulating national monopolies, and reforming key areas of the benefits system, notably housing, pensions and utilities.

The proposals depend ultimately on Russia's ability to raise its revenues, notably tax, and to cut its spending. Both measures are scarcely likely to improve the public mood, at least, not in the short term.

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# Evil, unnatural, but only too human

Whenever a horrific murder is committed we search desperately for a way of understanding it. That urge for explanation is multiplied tenfold when the horror is perpetrated by a child. Then, predictably, we tend to turn to the same stack of ready explanations. Lacking a map to understand the mind of a 12-year-old child who murders, apparently for semi-sexual pleasure, we grab any clue that offers the relief of comprehension. In truth, though, as we shall show, the quick and ready answers are often a blind - a way of avoiding understanding, of failing to grasp how a child turns into a killer.

Many of us were struggling yesterday to understand Sharon Carr, scrabbling through press reports, staring at her grinning photo. Here was a child who described being "turned on" by stabbing her 18-year-old victim 29 times and then mutilating her. Her crime was so violent, so extreme in its capacity, that detectives felt compelled to assume that it had been committed by a strong, brutal young man. But this child, when finally interviewed, showed no remorse. Sentenced to indefinite imprisonment, she stepped smiling from the dock. Her diaries described the murder in terms that freeze the mind: "If only I could kill you again. I promise I would make you suffer more this time."

And that provided the first quick and easy way of interpreting Sharon Carr.

Cold, chilling, therefore inhuman. She was an alien, a creature apart, not comparable to you or your neighbour. And that provides a kind of easy answer, the relief that says: "I couldn't do that. My child couldn't do that."

In this case, there was a second quick answer: ancient, primeval wickedness, called by its most intimidating name: voodoo. Of course, white European and American demonology has similar opportunities for escaping from rational interpretation. Witchcraft has a long and bloody and hypocritical history in both main branches of Christianity, from Salamanca to Salem. But this child is black. She grew up in Belize City. Her mother burnt black and red candles, sacrificed animals. Or so it is said. And there we have it: the child's mind was turned by black magic.

This - evil of the most primal kind - is the easiest escape route of all. We could call it the Stephen King school of understanding. It conjures up images from B-movies of men painted as skeletons, bedraggled in chicken feathers, wearing top hats, dancing madly round fires in the night to summon the spirits of the dead. The implication is that such practices corrupt an impressionable mind, turning the child into an automaton. And that, once again, conveniently allows us to regard her as inhuman.

There is some truth in these ways of explaining how Sharon Carr came to be who she is. But they seem vaguely to



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suggest that there is a heart of darkness in all our souls, which can be conjured up with a few feathers and an incantation. Nonsense: we are not all inherently evil killers. It is tempting to try to understand extremely depraved acts by arguing that we are all capable of committing them, given the right pressures, the right circumstances. But no: apart from anything else, many children are riddled with lunatic ideas by their parents and their surroundings, but succeed in shaking them off as they gain their own judgement and experience. And many people, confronted by apparently inhuman horror, retain their humanity

intact: witness the civilised individuals who survived the Holocaust.

The real story inside the story may be a simpler one. In a twisted way, it is a homey story. For, when you strip away the peculiarities of most cases of other-worldly violence, you almost always find an all-too-worldly reality of abuse, of systematic damage being done to a mind, not through Satanism, but through all-too-common parental neglect. It seems far more plausible that Sharon Carr's mind was mutilated, not by seeing chickens beheaded, but by routine violence enacted by her mother and others on herself, and all

those around her. Violence begets violence. "Those to whom evil is done, do evil in return." It is a law older than the Old Testament, but equally true in the Home Counties homes where sexual abuse has just the same capacity to turn bullying children into abusing adults. The cycle goes on and on, the abused growing up into abuser.

The discovery of the pervasive damage done to our society by domestic violence and abuse of children is one of the great and potent discoveries of recent times. Only in the past couple of decades have we started to grasp how significant a factor it is in engendering what the world previously understood merely as abstract evil. If, like Sharon Carr, a child has pepper poured on her vagina as routine punishment; if she witnesses her mother fix her stepfather's head in boiling fat; if this is the only way that she understands a whole gamut of human behaviour, then it is perfectly possible to understand that a child's mind may flip.

Not all minds do: we don't yet know what factors decide that one child will convert to a capacity for evil, but another does not. Neuroscientists are learning more and more about brain patterns, and genetic predisposition for certain traits, but their discoveries are at a rudimentary stage. Maybe one day we will be able to decide what is fated, and what nurture (or lack of nurture) may provoke.

Maybe some of us have murder-triggers that others lack. We do not know what they are, or how they are pulled. But we do know that where evil does break out, it comes from a complex blend of a natural self and of the horribly unnatural things that have been done to that individual. In other words, though it is by no means universal, it is only too human. Sharon is evil. But she isn't an alien.

## Log off, and we're dinosaurs

Deep down, we are fascinated by the demise of the dinosaurs because we want to know what may obliterate us (unless we escape to some distant galaxy before apocalypse strikes). The list of possible dinosaur disasters runs from volcanic activity and a rise in sea level, to the Earth being struck by a gigantic meteorite. But none of these is likely to cause the end of humanity. Much more likely is that the computers will all close down, and the whole world will grind to a halt. In fact, it nearly happened this week. Lots of people will not be paid in time for their Easter holiday because the Automated Clearing System collapsed. And that's nearly the end of the world, isn't it?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Britain backs family values, if you're white

Sir: Nobody should be surprised by the case of seven-year-old Whitney Forrester, who is threatened with deportation to an orphanage in Jamaica in spite of having a father and grandmother living in Britain ("Rejected by her mother and now by Britain", 25 March).

Our immigration laws have become increasingly tough and discriminatory against black and Asian people since the Cabinet decided to operate a covert colourbar in the late 1950s, a policy made explicit in Cabinet minutes for 1955 and 1961.

Against this background, "family values" do not stand a chance unless the family is white. If not, the family can expect every technicality to be used to keep it separated by excluding one or more members. The instinct to exclude is so strong that the present government will not ratify two clauses in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in which the union or reunion of parents and children is guaranteed above all other considerations.

In the case of Whitney Forrester, an innocent child - who had no need of separate entry clearance when she came to Britain with her mother - has become *persona non grata* because her mother abandoned her, even though her father and grandmother are anxious to keep and support her.

The next government must eliminate such travesties of justice by examining immigration and nationality laws and repealing those that give licence to the pernicious exercise of racial discrimination, so that the law can fulfil its proper role as the foundation of justice for all.

CHAS RAWES  
Campaign Co-ordinator, Christian Action for Justice in Immigration Law Glasgow

Sir: Words cannot express my feelings on reading of the plight of Whitney Forrester.

Perhaps the "silent" majority who apparently support tough immigration controls in the opinion polls will finally come to see what it means in practice. I doubt it, though. For every Whitney Forrester there are hundreds of others, almost always black, brown or yellow, who are thrown out without such publicity. The hunger-striking asylum-seekers, Whitney Forrester, the grieving husbands and wives waiting in vain for their loved ones to jump ever-higher obstacles in the Kafkaesque farce that is our immigration system... all are a national scandal.

It is not enough to condemn just "the Government". By our indifference, apathy and in many cases open hostility and xenophobia, we are all guilty. We should be ashamed.

STEVEN POWELL  
London N7

### What a prude!

Sir: Defecation, urinating and copulating are indeed as natural as breast-feeding (letter, 25 March), but for John Collier to try and justify his shameful prudishness by judging them as one and the same is ridiculous.

Has he never eaten at a restaurant, or does he also frown upon watching people eat in public? L.R. WHITELEY  
London SE9



### Pitdown: the simple answer

Sir: You report (21 March) on a meeting at the Linnean Society which discussed, once again, the possible instigator of the Pitdown forgery. What past and current theorists fail to understand is that there were only two individuals who actually found the bones at Pitdown and that the same two individuals demonstrated the bones to the scientific public at the Science Museum.

These two were Charles Dawson, a local solicitor and keen amateur fossil-hunter, and Arthur Smith Woodward, the keeper of palaeontology at the Science Museum, London. No middle-man was involved. The problem has always been: who planted the bones?

Sir Arthur Keith, a previous suspect, was drawn into the Pitdown affair when invited, by Smith Woodward, to view the bones at the Science Museum. At that time, 1912, Arthur Keith was a curator of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, London. He was a world authority on primate and human anatomy, whereas Smith Woodward specialised in fossil fish and had no special knowledge of human anatomy.

Keith had mixed feelings, from the beginning, about the true nature of the jaw bone: he detailed the simian character of the Pitdown jaw bone on numerous occasions in his *Antiquity of Man*. Immediate recognition was complicated because key parts of the bone were missing. Smith Woodward, on the other hand, was never in

any doubt about the bone being human.

I was present that day in 1953 when Weiner and co descended on the Buckton Browne Research Farm with a "doctored" chimpanzee jaw bone. To my amazement, Arthur Keith gave in immediately. So why did he not respond like that in 1912? He was a young man then and very ambitious, whereas Smith Woodward was at the top of the scientific establishment. Even so, had Arthur Keith stated categorically that the jaw bone was that of a chimpanzee, that would have been the end of the affair.

The other point Pitdown theorists do not take into consideration is the site where the jaw bone was "found". It was "found" in some untouched remnants of the original gravel some four feet six inches down at the bottom of the pit. Hinton or others, now accused of the forgery, would have required the foresight of Tiresias to have arranged the planting of the bone in such a site, and then waited confidently for Dawson to come along and start digging at the precise point at the bottom of the pit. The more plausible explanation is that Dawson carried the bone into the pit. Dawson was an established stainer of fossils. This reduced the forgery to two individuals - those who found the bones and presented them to the scientific community. W.J. DEMPSTER FRCS  
Lockerley, Hampshire

### Consultants at the coal-face

Sir: Dr Southern (letter, 21 March) is correct in stating that consultants spend more time on administration, and that the reduction in junior doctors' hours is another potential difficulty for maintaining a first-class level of continuity of care for acutely sick patients. He is, however, incorrect to say that consultants have too little time to see sick patients, especially when they are admitted. We are a busy two-site campus with a large casualty department. When each consultant was on the rota every fifth day with his team for emergency admissions, the difficulty was to fit an already crowded schedule and the system often worked badly, yet it is the way most hospital admission teams work - often the consultant only has time to be shown the sickest patient and may not return until the next routine ward round.

My directorate runs a physician-of-the-week (POW) system, with one consultant available 24 hours a day for seven days on a rota system. His routine work is cancelled for that week. There are two ward rounds, at 8am and 5.30pm, teaching sessions for students and house staff, and ample time to follow up the admissions of previous days. Continuity of care has been transformed, especially at weekends. Far from consultants being kept from the bedside, the week is enjoyable, different and there is time

to do a proper job. It has optimised the timetables of busy physicians who have a lot to contribute to the care of the acutely ill.

Dr STEPHEN G SPIRO  
Clinical Director of Medicine  
University College London  
Hospital Trust  
London W1

### Baffled by 1917? Just ask Trotsky

Sir: As a research historian I am very much in favour of Andrew Marr's suggestion that we "should honour the people in disorganised archives who burrow through individual life stories" ("Makers of their own tragedy", 26 March). I am less happy however at his implication that Orlando Figes has somehow written the history of the Russian Revolution according to Tony Blair.

What Figes has done is to uncover a number of interesting new details about the revolution while adding very little to our overall understanding of it. This is mainly because Figes, focusing on what the Russian people themselves did, misses the huge significance of the Western attack on the revolution from 1918. The revolution survived, but most of those who made it were killed in the misnamed Civil War with the White armies.

For a general understanding of 1917 and after, John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* and Trotsky's mammoth *History of the Russian Revolution* remain by far the best guides. To these it is the

task of the research historian, I'm afraid, merely to add footnotes of qualification or embellishment.

KEITH FLETT  
Curator, London Socialist  
Historians Group  
London N17

### When Easter visitors drop in

Sir: We love having a river as boundary to our garden, but find the attentions and droppings of five geese a problem. Is there any way of getting rid of them... apart from the obvious Easter solution?

JOHN RATCLIFFE  
Ipswich

Sir: I was puzzled as to why the local Sainsbury's store at Apsley Mills should want to open for 24 hours on Easter Thursday, which is 4 April. I found that they really meant Maundy Thursday, 27 March. This is one more example of how the secularisation of this country is destroying our family and cultural fabric.

The Rev CHRISTOPHER TERRY  
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

### Off the pitch

Sir: Perhaps I might fine-tune the definition of "pitching" supplied by Miriam Andrews (letter, 24 March). Precipitation of snow in Bristol is only considered to be pitching if it does not melt when it reaches the ground - otherwise a snowfall is deemed to be *not pitching*... and it is safe to put on your daps and dap down to the local shop.

DAVID BRYANT  
London W9

### Spirit of '68 too far out for us

Sir: Your article "Students abandon sex and drugs for mobile phones and laptops" (24 March) seemed surprised at the findings of the recent survey.

Oh, if only I could have gone to university in 1968! I should have loved to spend my grant (in line with the cost of living) on jolly nights in the Union bar, learning purely for the love of my subject, discussing how terrible Vietnam was and occupying the vice-chancellor's office over a rise in campus rent.

And the secure knowledge that my third-class degree, be it in fine art or engineering, would be enough to guarantee me an offer for every job which I applied to! In 1968 it was possible to use your four-year ticket to Bohemia to its fullest advantage.

Now *The Independent* proposes that "of course students should pay for their education" (leading article, 24 March).

This would "of course" lead to a massive debt after graduation. But graduation is not enough even to get you an interview for that well-paid job necessary to repay your loan. "A degree is not enough", as the mantra at the careers service goes.

I lament that this situation has arisen because of the ridiculous numbers pouring into tertiary education, placing an intolerable strain on teaching resources. I bristle at the "pay for it yourself" attitude of today's fiftysomethings. However I am eternally grateful to Glasgow University for the sense of privilege that I have after four years' learning there.

LORNA RETTIG  
Glasgow

### Voting pattern in new constituency

Sir: Mr Welch of Cwtyd can indeed find out the voting make-up of his newly redistributed constituency (letter, 22 March).

First, phone the electoral registration officer for the area and find out what wards are included in the new constituency.

Next, go to the public library and check the voting patterns for these wards for the preceding local elections. (To be on the safe side, check back two local elections lest an out-of-kilter result be present.)

Because wards are seldom split in boundary redistributions, this will allow him to assess with reasonable accuracy the electoral pattern of his new constituency.

However, writing "anyone but ABC" on the ballot paper (assuming there are more than two candidates) would result in a spoilt ballot for lack of clarity.

NANCY IRWIN  
Limerick, Irish Republic

### Our rural friend

Sir: My view is a vast East Anglian landscape, but just two fields. One is set-aside, whilst in the other the landowner is ploughing out a bridleway for greater arable acreage.

Thank God for such folk as Jake Fiennes with his field margins, high hedges and broader crops ("The game of life", 22 March). Will the keeper, once the countryman's worst enemy, turn out to be his best friend?

STAN HAYNES  
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

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## analysis

# Where there's a Will, there's a way



A gangland 'Romeo and Juliet', a fascist 'Richard III', a woman as 'King Lear' ... Can the Bard survive all this modern tinkering? Yes, argues Richard D North

The groundlings are all astir. American teen star Claire Danes has moved on from MTV's *My So-Called Life* to an LA gang-war *Romeo + Juliet*, opening in cinemas here from tomorrow. So all's well: people have always messed with the Bard.

Shakespeare is enjoying a success which is likely to prove light years longer lasting even than *Star Wars*. He can be digitised but not mastered. You can throw what you like at the plays and feel that the old beggar was on your side all along. While the audience comes out talking about the special effects, it's the poetry and themes they dream about later. That, and the performances, of course. Repertory theatre may be dead, but there remains a sense of a national repertory theatre - if anything enhanced by television - and there is a special sport in watching a familiar face from a soap or a thriller working with a different class of material. And then there is the buzz of watching a new generation of actors and actresses aging into the big stuff.

The National Theatre unveils a new *King Lear* today, and for once we haven't been teased with star interviews. The fun is in wondering whether the quiet Ian Holm is up to this dark and noisy piece? Out comes his 1967 *Henry I* (on audio cassette) for a rerun reminding us - what is hard to remember with hi-tech modern productions - that we are invited to be kind and eke out our performance with your mind. The mind skips along to Laurence Olivier's filmed *Henry I*, where the camera goes backstage to enhance Shake-

peare's game of showing us the swan of Avon's feet paddling beneath the serene surface.

In the surreal world of *Lear* nearly anything can work. Youngish Kathryn Hunter at the Haymarket, Leicester, was a mesmerising *Lear*, acting beyond gender and years to portray a regal loss of command of self, family and realm. There was a little, but only a very little, of Patricia Hayes's *Edna the Inebriated Woman* about it.

One half hopes the National's is one of the quieter productions. It's true, we are mostly glad that modern effects are high-powered. Vulgar they may be, but even a dedicated follower of Shakespeare is glad of things which help pass the time. And sometimes, they add clarity too. In the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Lear*, Robert Stephens' job was made a little easier when the protagonists' allegiances were mapped out in colour-coded costume.

One was almost grateful for all that Dolby sound in Branagh's *Hamlet*. The ghost of his father can bellow, "Swear, swear, swear," in the ribcage-jarring Sennurround which accompanies intergalactic conflict in Hollywood offerings. And if Branagh's *Hamlet* had resonances of Olivier's *Prince and the Showgirl*, well, if we're to have the full text we might as well have some pious too. All distractions were welcome.

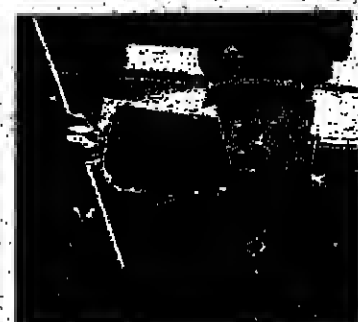
The bigger effects are not confined to film: the RSC's *Lear* had the planet earth split with the awfulness of family strife, and it was drenched in the quantities of light you mostly see in rock concerts or in the more unnerving kind of modern restaurant. Half the

audience at Stratford can't follow the words, so it is only fair to give them some other thrills, and an English-speaker can quite enjoy them too.

There is nothing wrong with mucking about with the look of Shakespeare. Actors have to be dressed in something or other, and they have to stand in front of some sort of scenery. Currently, productions tend to transmute into the fields of dictators. This month, the Haymarket, Leicester's *Lear* and Richmond Theatre's *Hamlet* took advantage of the cheapness of ex-Army greatcoats and charity shop evening wear. They drew on Kafka and Orwell to give us a vaguely East European nihilism. Granted that medieval history was mostly about "domestic" and the troubles absolute rulers faced from their barons, dictators and ganglanders make a perfectly good simulacrum. A fine coffee table book, *Shakespeare in Performance* (Keith Parsons and Pamela Mason, Salamander Books), hauls together historical and near-historical representations of the plays, and points out that Donald Wolfit based his 1942 *Richard III* on Hitler. Who wouldn't have, then?

Ian McKellen (a good Dauphin in 1967's *Henry V*) says that Shakespeare's plays started by being staged anachronistically, and thus liberated, went on to embellish Richard Eyre's reading of *Richard III* into something which was not merely modern and dictatorial, but piercingly English because it had hints of *The Remains of the Day* and its themes of a Mosleyite Britain.

More worryingly, McKellen seems to believe that the mod-



Shakespeare's infinite variety: (clockwise from top left) Al Pacino's 'Looking for Richard'; Kenneth Branagh's 'Henry V'; Baz Luhrmann's gang-war 'Romeo + Juliet'; Kathryn Hunter as 'Lear'; and Ian McKellen's 'Richard III'



ern age can at last see *Richard III* as a man more sinned against than sinning: people had always been horrible to him, partly because of his deformity, so he became beastly. The Elizabethan mind felt free to hate deformity in its own right and we need to move on a bit from that. But equally, we find in Shakespeare a mind so good that the centuries add little to his insight and anyway we can assert that this is a body of work so respectable no political correctness can censor our discussion of it.

There are limits, as we saw on television last weekend. Deborah Warner's direction of Fiona Shaw in *Richard II* produced something thrilling and gorgeous, but finally a little pan-tonomic. Any king snogging his barons in the throne room seems a tad improbable. Shakespeare doesn't get near to hinting it. According to Nigel Saul, in a biography to be published next month in the revived Yale English Monarchs series, Shakespeare got *Richard II* more near to life than we might expect. This king may or may not have been queer, but he was a stickler for formalities, in public anyway.

Still, our recent crop of Shakespeare adventures remains more vigorous than silly,

and Shakespeare's texts chew up psychobabble and spit it out. So it is good fun to spot someone like Al Pacino doing a *Richard III* which revels in depravity with little apology from character or actor. This is a *Richard* in which God is invited to stand up for bastards. Pacino follows Olivier's 1955 rendition in seeing the hunchback as a bit of a laugh. Perhaps it took a short Italian to see an English monarch as an over-achieving Mafioso. Above all, he did service by showing a movie audience that violence doesn't have to be mindless.

Nor do larger political sensitivities matter. Branagh's *Henry V*, said to be anti-war, is actually plain intelligent. But it doesn't matter, either, that Olivier's wartime *Henry V* was xenophobic. Shakespeare wrote Tudor propaganda: a nation fighting for its life is always up for a bit of cheering on.

Whatever the verdict on old performances, we will always have the evidence. Every generation from now on will not only have the timelessness of the text, but in video and celluloid aspic, every production style from the Second World War on.

This does have its drawbacks. We may forget the value of the ephemeral stage and the special skills it demands and rewards. Amongst contemporaries, Branagh stands out, at least for now. He has been our Olivier as actor-manager: he almost invented the modern Shakespeare mass audience. His acting, like Olivier's, is varied but quite limited. He looks great in tights. He can say the verse and gets way beyond craftsmanlike emoting, but even more than Olivier, his amiability robs him of darkness. But it is lovely to see the hammy, actorly tradition alive and well in him.

There is, even on film, a lot to be said for staginess: Pacino was a joy because his was not merely a New York "Method" performance, but his film is a "Method" portrayal of an actor discovering the part. Pacino had done *Richard III* on the stage long before the film: his naive excitement at exegesis is disingenuous but charming. It is also camp, in its way.

*Lear*, though not attempted by many actors, utterly sinks surprisingly few of them. But most more or less fail: Robert Stephens was a cheerful, dried-out drunk and Michael Horden seemed to have early onset. Mind you,

Horden was performing in a BBC Shakespeare cycle of the Seventies and Eighties, which seemed curiously dated considering it was the offspring of the Peter Hall-John Barton Shakespeare revolution of the Sixties.

But on cassette and video, we can all have the ultimate *Lear* of our time: Paul Scofield's. Though Scofield's voice - sometimes carries a hint of the Dalek, it had - and has - great power, and the occasional squeak which conveys imperiousness, swerving off into querulousness in just the right way.

Peter Brook, the director of this *Lear*'s several outings (The Aldwych in 1962, audiotape 1965, and film 1970), is the epitome of the post-Bede theatre, but demonstrates also the evolution of Shakespearean style. James Shaw, at Stratford's Shakespeare Centre, points out that Brook cut his teeth on bold productions of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tempest* with the likes of Olivier and Vivien Leigh from the Forties onward.

*Hamlet*, however, sinks most actors. It requires an ability to convey physicality and playfulness, introspection and madness. Mostly, it's the Adrian Mole in him that comes out.

Derek Jacobi is getting better

and better in butch parts, but for the BBC's effort seemed weak. Mel Gibson never got close. Olivier's gloomy prince seemed narcissistic. The more you see the others, the more you treasure Branagh's effort.

Best of all were Michael Maloney's bits of *Hamlet* in Branagh's lovely *The Black Midwinter* (like Pacino's outing, an exploration of actorliness and the play). On stage at the Richmond, however, Maloney scampered and scarpers too much and was a bit too winning. J B Priestley observed that Shakespeare certainly liked box office success. It's a safe bet he wouldn't mind whether *Romeo and Juliet* was set in New York or LA, just so long as it was staged at all.

As for *Lear*, we will admire it whether it's set in an old folks home (as was at the Haymarket, Leicester) or outer space. And the odd thing is about anyone English is especially allowed to be proud of Shakespeare. Every generation has shared that curious sense of ownership: when we perform or watch him, we are participating in his work of inventing Englishness.

Romeo + Juliet review, The Tablet, page 4.

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## Call Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Yesterday I brought you extracts from an amazing High Court case in which the judge, both counsel and the defendant are ALL masons. Not only that, but the defendant, who is charged with attempted murder, is a real mason, ie a stonemason. My local Masonic Lodge has informed me not to reveal any more secrets of the Grand Order, but their bribe was not nearly large enough to tempt me, so I am bringing you more of this sensational case today.

Judge: Just a moment, just a moment, Mr Minghella. Are you trying to say that you are a proper mason and we are not?  
Defendant: I certainly am. You call yourselves Masons. I am a mason. Take the Elks and Buffaloes. The Elks and the Buffaloes call themselves elks and buffaloes, but that does not make them elks and buffaloes.  
Judge: It's not really as easy as that, is it? I mean, you could say that it was a matter of cognition.  
Defendant: Cognition? That's not a real word. That's

the kind of word they use on Melvyn Bragg's *Start The Week!*

Judge: Bear with me a moment. Does an elk know he is an elk? No. He has no concept of elkeness. "Elk" is simply a term applied to him by humans for their own use. But a member of the order of the Elks knows that he is an Elk. From that point of view the man is an Elk but the animal is not an elk.  
Defendant: That's quite clever.

Judge: You don't get to be a judge by being stupid.  
Defendant: No. You get to be a judge by being a Mason.  
Judge: There are a great many Masons who are not judges.  
Defendant: That is statistically irrelevant.  
Judge: Well spotted. Incidentally, would you like to hear a Masonic joke?  
Defendant: Do I have any choice?  
Judge: No. Here it is. Which West End shopkeeper was not a Mason?  
Defendant: I don't know.  
Which West End shopkeeper was not a Mason?  
Judge: Fortnum!



**Myles Kingston**

Defendant: That's not very funny.  
Judge: It is if you are a Mason. We all stick together, you know. And that includes laughing at each other's jokes.  
Defendant: Not true.  
Judge: How do you mean, not true?  
Defendant: We were told at school that the most famous Mason of all was Mozart.  
Judge: Yes.  
Defendant: We were also told that Mozart could never get a proper job, was never

decently paid and never even got a proper funeral. If that is how the Masons look after their own when they are famous, God help the ones who have no talent at all.

Prosecution: M'Lud, fascinating though all this is, might I beg you to return to the trial in hand? Mr Minghella is accused of attempted murder.

Judge: Absolutely right. Sorry. Carry on.

Prosecution: Mr Minghella, on 17 July last year you were standing on a bridge over the M2 motorway.

Defendant: That is true. Prosecution: From that bridge you dropped a large block of stone which by a miracle did not hit a car.

Defendant: It was not a miracle. It was simply due to the fact that there was no car underneath.

Prosecution: On the block of stone were carved the words: "THOU SHALT NOT KILL". Is that correct?

Defendant: No. It was "shalt". Thou shalt not kill.

Prosecution: Mr Minghella, I put it to you that that was the act of a religious fanatic who had a grudge against car

traffic and was attempting to kill a passing motorist to punish him!

Defendant: I put it to you that you are talking through your hat.

Judge: It is quite possible of course that he had not paid his dues.

Prosecution: Who, my Lord? Judge: Mozart. If Mozart was behind with his subs, and his membership had lapsed, it would explain why nobody helped him with his funeral.

Prosecution: My Lord! With respect, we are trying to hear a case of attempted murder here.

Judge: Are we? How exciting. Who is the culprit?

Prosecution: This man here. At least, I say it is this man here. My colleague says it isn't. We thought we would talk about it for a while and then those 12 people over there could decide which one of us was right.

Judge: Sounds a remarkably haphazard procedure to me, but if that's how you want to do it, it's fine by me. Court adjourned!

More of this tomorrow, if you can bear the excitement.



## How long shall we avoid the immigration issue?

On Tuesday I was again rebuked by the Prime Minister for raising the issue of immigration at this election. John Major said: "What I am not prepared to see is this issue raised as a partisan political issue because we have seen the most immense improvements in race relations in this country."

There is now no misunderstanding. When I raised this at Prime Minister's Questions on 4 March, I thought Mr Major might not have heard my question, against the row of the Labour benches trying to shout me down. Now we who wish to serve our constituents - yes all of them, black, white and Asian - must explain ourselves.

An election issue is anything that is of interest to a significant group of people who demand to know what the attitude of the candidates will be. There may be considerable regional variations. In Huntingdon, Mr Major's seat, they have an ethnic population of 2.2 per cent and, I dare say, immigration is not a very big issue there. On the other hand, the recent fall in wheat prices may be a farmer's nightmare. If that farming is an industry subsidised and distorted by interference from Westminster and the EU, the farmer wants to hear the Conservative candidate's view. Would Mr Major say: "Oh I cannot discuss the details of wheat prices and I do not wish it to be a partisan political issue?"

What is a political issue, whether partisan or not, is decided at a General Election by the electorate. It is true that while the House of Commons is sitting there is often agreement between the whips' offices (where Mr Major received much of his training) to exclude discussion of embarrassing topics. For instance, from 1990 to 1992 there was no great discussion about the alternatives to the exchange rate mechanism. Indeed the great and good told us that there was no alternative, and to advocate a floating pound, which in those days would have meant a lower pound, was to sell Britain short. Between 1965 and 1970 the great parties prevented the discussion of immigration in Parliament. Parliament's cowardice and embarrassment encouraged extra-parliamentary action in the shape of both National Front activity and riots.

Once an election is called, the people decide the issues. In a free society with a free press they decide by exerting the power of the market place. They buy and read those newspapers which report what interests them. Politically correct editors may be appalled but editors discuss immigration because they want to feed their wives and children and they do so by selling more newspapers.

Why is immigration an election issue? Because the lives of many people in the industrial areas and elsewhere over the last 25 years



Nicholas Budgen

I used to ask Willie Whitelaw how he would feel if, over 25 years, Winchester became a 90 per cent Asian school

have been transformed by immigration. In the West Midlands, the ethnic population is 11.5 per cent. But that figure is not spread evenly over the county. In Birmingham's Ladywood constituency, the ethnic minority is 42 per cent. Three constituencies here have ethnic minorities over 30 per cent, and many West Midlandsers feel themselves to be strangers in their own pubs, schools and streets.

It does not take a great effort of imagination to understand the problems of this transformation. Between 1974 and 1979, I spent a lot of time trying to persuade Willie Whitelaw, then shadow Home Secretary, that something had to be done to reduce immigration. Brave and loyal though he was and is, he hated being falsely accused of racism.

I used to ask Willie how he would feel if, over 25 years, Winchester became a 90 per cent Asian school? Or how he would feel if in 10 years Trinity College Cambridge became an 80 per cent West Indian college? Or again what if over 20 years he found that the members of Whites Club spoke mainly Punjabi? Wouldn't you feel a little uneasy and a stranger in your own haunts?

This discussion may be embarrassing. But to prevent it is a denial of a constitutional decision. We trust the jury to decide the most delicate and even inflammatory issues in a criminal trial. In the same way at an election we trust the people to consider the most difficult and sensitive issues.

We believe in the balance and good sense of the British. We know that the people will condemn those who take advantage of any minority. Most of all we believe in the importance of discussion.

Finally, I defend myself from accusations of racism and desperate opportunism. I do not know what is meant by racist. To point out that there are racial differences is not to advocate hatred, or violence against a minority. As to opportunism, I can only say I have argued about immigration at every election since 1974. It has been my duty to discuss an issue which concerns basically the 80 per cent white population and the 20 per cent Asian and black population of my constituency. It is ironic that this year many Asians have been emerging as the champions of strict control of immigration. Perhaps that is opportunism!

We Tories have nothing to be ashamed of in discussing immigration. By refusing to discuss it the leaders of the great parties fuel resentment and fear. We remember that even under the Tories immigration is running at about 60,000 a year. Would Labour's shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw be good enough to show how much more immigration would result from his proposed relaxation of the rules? Private promises and the denial of debate can only encourage tension.

## Rough justice from the court jesters

by Glenda Cooper

"I was confused as to whether I could say guilty or not guilty," explained Bonnie Schot, one of the jurors jailed for 30 days for contempt of court after they allegedly "wilfully refused" to reach a verdict.

Ms Schot got out of jail after one night in Holloway but the jury system is once again in the dock. After all, no criminal, but any fool, can be a juror. If Ms Schot was as confused as she says she was over this complex case, can we really rely on 12 jurors to be able to reach a true verdict according to the evidence as they are sworn to do?

Juries have been in existence since the twelfth century to decide the facts in a case proved by the evidence presented by the court and to judge their peers ("who will understand", in the famous words of 1066 and all that).

This may have been fine in the twelfth century when legal processes were fairly informal, but now the increasing complexity of cases is making it more and more difficult for juries. The American poet Robert Frost summed up the jury as "twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer".

Last month the Narey report produced recommendations, which are supported by the Government, to limit trial by jury. Removing the automatic right to jury trial in cases such as theft, handling stolen goods and some sexual offences would result in 18,000 cases being heard by magistrates rather than in Crown Courts, saving millions of pounds.

But the Labour Party has said that, if elected, it will not support any changes to trial by jury. "If a police officer or an MP or even the Secretary of State was charged with an offence of dishonesty, would they not insist on being tried by a jury?" asked Jack Straw. "If that is the case, why should others be denied this right of election?"

A police officer or an MP may well insist on a jury but as a former juror myself I would be highly alarmed at my fate being in the hands of my peers. I served on two juries last year. At the end of that time I left, convinced that unless jurors were given crash courses in law then the justice system would be better off without them.

These were not complex fraud trials like the Maxwell trial. These were not even infamous libel cases involving awarding compensation (last year the then Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas



After serving on two juries last year, I became convinced that the system would be better off without them

Bingham, compared the situation of a jury trying to decide libel compensation as "the position of sheep loosed in a unfenced common, with no shepherd").

My experiences were of a rape case and an actual bodily harm case. But even in these relatively straightforward trials the depth of confusion was staggering.

In the ABH case there was a fair amount of medical evidence. I thought there were several red herrings in the explanations of how the injuries had been caused. Others did not. None of

us felt qualified to decide which was factually correct.

Discussions in the canteen showed wide variations on what good character or reasonable doubt actually meant. For one person it had to be photographic evidence of Colonel Mustard in the library with the lead piping; for another a shifty look pre-occupied unassailable guilt. Outside the courtroom memories were confused as to who had said what and when.

More than 10 years ago the Roskill Committee report on fraud trials tried in measure memory, comprehension and

concentration of the average fraud trial jury through simulated studies. It produced uncomfortable results. Sample jurors listened to a tape prepared from a transcript of a real trial. When tested afterwards, only four out of 53 had an adequate understanding of it.

Lawyers themselves are firmly in favour of jury trials remaining. "The whole point usually in a trial is a person's honesty or dishonesty," said Roger Ede of the Law Society. "It is an issue that ordinary members of the public are particularly well placed to decide." (But what do lawyers

know? They are forbidden to sit on juries, I have.)

In any case, are you really being tried by 12 people from all different walks of life? No official research has taken place on juries in this country because the law prohibits it - although in 1993 a national study of more than 8,000 jurors by Michael Zander, Professor of Law at the London School of Economics, showed that all social classes were represented on juries in proportion to their numbers in the population.

But last year Lord Donaldson, the former Master of the Rolls, said that for complex trials juries do end up becoming composed of people specially selected because they can devote months to jury service. "Inevitably they are those who would not otherwise be more gainfully occupied and who have no pressing commitments in the period of the trial," he said.

Privately many lawyers will admit that there is a preponderance of the unemployed, the retired and housewives while the middle classes will do their utmost to wriggle out of their two-week stint, which does not require much effort - a hooked holiday, a hospital appointment, a child.

The problem if you wish to reform the jury system is: what do you replace it with? Well, democracy won't crumble if magistrates (or juries with relevant expertise) take on more trials that are currently judged by juries.

And if not, let us at least have more research into how juries work. We have no idea whether there is a class element in acquittals and convictions. We have no idea if they are working properly at all.

In the meantime, let's make it more difficult for middle-class do-gooders - who praise jury service to the skies but wouldn't be caught dead on one - to get out of it. If they want it to be democratic, let them do their bit of public service. If they complain about perverse juries, let them sit on one.

And if you feel that you can't be bothered, think about being in the dock yourself confronted by 12 strangers. Remember the infamous case of the ouija board jurors who convicted an insurance broker of a double murder after four of them turned to more unconventional means of solving the case.

Actually, in the retrial Stephen Young, 36, was found guilty again. Which, I suppose, could restore your faith in juries. Or, for that matter, in ouija boards.

So much speculation has flown over the outcome of the Great Telly Debate, it's amazing to think that the ground rules haven't yet been decided. A frenzy of cross-party speculation is currently under way about who should take part, who should stand where, who should introduce it (Jonathan Dimbleby is the ITV choice, and his big brother David the BBC's nominee), who should speak first and for how long...

The key players in this battle of quasi-Ruritanian protocol are Lord Holme for the Liberal Democrats (who must get his leader to the podium or die in the attempt), Michael (House of Cards) Dobbs for the Tories and, masterminding Mr Blair's rhetorical display, Lord Derry Irving, who, as former pupil-master to both Tony and Cherie Blair, is in, let us say, a strong position to take over from Lord Mackay in the Lord Chancellor's robes.

Connoisseurs of debate will think of the great clashes of yore. Those of a classical disposition will sigh over the gladiatorial exchanges of Demosthenes and Aeschines. Those of a scientific bent will think of Huxley vs Wilberforce when the great Darwinist and the pooh-poohing bishop scyathed at each other over evolution and the Book of Genesis. Fans of a more modern debating style will chortle at the time when Mr Gyles Brandreth, later to become an MP, stood on his head at the Oxford Union despatch box, to prove... well no one can remember what he was trying to prove, but I'm sure he managed it. And then there was the Lloyd Bentsen vs Dan Quayle debate and its most famous interchange. The question going around the lobby at present is who will say it? Tony Blair, in yesterday's press conference about Labour's manifesto, banged on about "giving a sense of purpose and direction back to Britain after six years of weak national leadership", and made it clear that, when it comes to direction, he finds nothing wrong with what came before the "six years". So will it be Mr Major or Mr Blair who says to his opponent: "I knew Margaret Thatcher. Margaret

The boudoir of George II's mistress is getting a Heritage makeover after 230 years. It's a long time to wait, Camilla john walsh



Thatcher was a friend of mine. Senator - you're no Margaret Thatcher?

The judge in the contempt-of-court case, Judge Anura Cooray, clearly does not stand for any nonsense. One of the jurors whom he sent to prison for 30 days for wilfully refusing to reach a verdict claimed "It was a very complicated case" and "I just didn't understand it"; but the judge sent her to the slammer anyway. I've heard it said in legal quarters that ignorance is no defence; but I'd no idea that it was itself a criminal condition. There is, however, a darker tendency afoot here - the idea that a judge could bring the majesty of the law upon the heads of two innocent citizens because they failed to have an opinion.

It's a worrying precedent. I can see in Lord's draconian ruling being followed by others. Nervous media commentators will be led away, ashen-faced, from the Groucho Club for wilfully failing to have an

opinion about *The English Patient*. ("It's a very complicated plot," confessed the defendant, pathetically. "I just didn't understand it"). Paramilitary SWAT teams will round up pockets of floating voters in Essex, while an underground cabal of "Don't Knows" will meet guiltily by candlelight to exchange exquisitely balanced views on blood sports, housing and education and chant their accursed slogan, "Well, there's something to be said for both sides..." Small children who cannot

decide if their favourite colour is blue or green will be handed into care (the so-called "turquoise option" will be deemed inadmissible). And all copies of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* will be rounded up, so that the last sentence of each copy ("Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent") can be ritually excised.

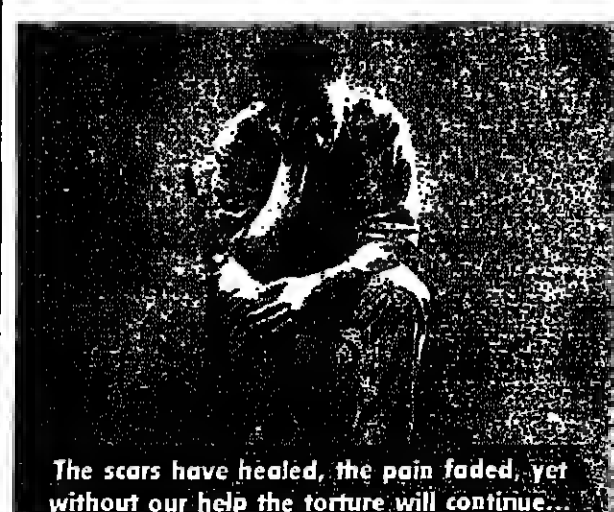
You think I exaggerate? I don't think so, as the children tend to say. You can find evidence everywhere that somebody somewhere will label it a transgression and try and attack for it. Over in Kabul, the seriously fundamentalist Taliban militia - who last autumn banned women from being educated or employed, banned games and basically outlawed fun of any kind - are at it again. This time it's hearts. Not only must you have one, it must be kept as long as possible, like the prophet Mohammed's. The military authorities have just fired 84 civil servants for trimming their facial hair. They've even invented a bogus-sounding rule-of-thumb for deciding how long a beard should be. A Mr Muazin, of the worryingly-named Department for Promoting Virtue and Preventing Vice, explains: "The beard must be long enough to come out of a clenched fist held at the base of the chin". Anyone whose whiskers fail to protrude beyond the fist will be kicked off the payroll. I expect it'll be penises next.

And before you get too Western-complacent about casual cruelties inflicted beyond reason, consider the fate of poor Francois-Jean Le Fefevre, the French martyr whose statue is shortly to adorn the middle of Paris. Francois-Jean met an unusually horrible end - his tongue was torn out, his hand chopped off, his head removed and the rest of his fellow blasphemers a lesson; but since his only crimes were "failing to remove his hat to a procession of Capuchin friars", mutilating a crucifix and hanging out with "a group of young people". Can we assume that it's a damned un-British thing? We like to think that any

rude boy on our streets in 1766, from Bermondsey to Berwick-on-Tweed, could have been guilty of such things without being decapitated, de-tongued and unhanded. But then one thinks of Fielding's hero Tom Jones (who was arraigned for murder for picking flowers on a Sunday), one thinks of Michael Howard and Mr Justice Cooray and one is not so sure.

While we're in the 18th century, I see that English Heritage is starting up the boudoir of one of the most celebrated of royal mistresses. It's a Marble Hill House, the Twickenham villa erected in the 1750s by Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, with a little present of £11,500 given her by King George II; apparently it was the going rate for services to the monarchical groin. Her ladyship commissioned from court designers all manner of gorgeous silk wall-hangings and damask drapes to adorn her chamber, where she lay, doubtless arrayed in attitudes of abandonment, on a four-poster (king-size, obviously) bed with - though I add this detail reluctantly - five mirrors. The result was so seductive that even the great Alexander Pope used to abandon his vitriolic satires of an afternoon to show his friends round Henrietta's new gaff. Now the Heritage people are restoring it to its former glory. They're borrowing a bed, "typical of the period", from the Victoria & Albert Museum, spending a cool £30,000 on re-upholstering it and in festooning the walls with silks.

It all sounds delightful. But should royal mistresses have to wait until 230 years after their death to get their living quarters done up? I think we might take Henrietta's house as a benchmark and offer all future royal mistresses a few grand's worth of soft furnishings while they're still alive, provided they can produce documentary evidence of their time as court horizontale. Mrs Parker Bowles, I suspect, is not the kind of woman to turn her nose up at £30,000-worth of festoon curtains, a new Slumberland mattress and a few spectacular swags...



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# business & city

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## Collapse of Freemans sale stuns Sears

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

Liam Strong's position as chief executive of Sears, the retail group, looked more vulnerable than ever last night after plans to sell its Freemans home shopping business received a serious setback.

In the latest of a series of twists which have afflicted the sale process, N Brown, the Manchester-based mail order group, pulled out of exclusive negotiations to buy Freemans. It said that after its due diligence process it had felt "unable to proceed".

Sears has now resuscitated talks with Littlewoods, the original buyer which itself walked out on Sears earlier this month when it discovered that Sears was holding talks with other parties.

With the Freemans sale fast becoming a fiasco, the City was yesterday questioning whether Mr Strong could survive this latest embarrassment. One analyst said: "This is par for the course with Sears. Whatever route Liam Strong chooses you feel there will be a mishap along the way".

Sears shares fell 1.5p to 74.5p, their lowest point for almost

five years. Asked if they were now worth buying, John Richards, retail analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "No they are not. You are better off buying a lottery ticket. You've got more chance of winning."

The collapse of the N Brown deal will further frustrate Sears shareholders who have become alarmed at the Selfridges-to-British Shoe group's failure to take advantage of more benign retail conditions.

It places Sears in a weaker bargaining position with Littlewoods and will make it harder to achieve the original agreed price of £395m.

It will also mean a delay to the deal as it will almost certainly be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr Strong is under pressure to complete the transaction quickly as he has promised to return £410m to shareholders.

Ironically the MMC set aside its original investigation into the Littlewoods-Freemans deal only yesterday following formal notification from Littlewoods that the deal was off.

The Office of Fair Trading will now look at the merger afresh before making a decision. If the MMC refers the deal again, it could take up to three months before it reports its findings.

N Brown would not reveal what it had discovered in its due diligence process that had spurred the deal.

However, it is thought that Freemans' short-to-medium-term earnings stream was not what the company had anticipated. The two sides were then £40m-£50m apart in their valuation.

Mr Strong attempted to put a brave face on the latest embarrassment. "Freemans has a high reputation in agency mail order and enjoys a strong market position," he said.

"While we believe that consolidation in the mail order market would be beneficial, we are only interested in pursuing opportunities that are in the best interests of the company and enhance shareholder value."

Mr Strong's position at Sears has long been under threat and there have been regular reports that headhunters have been appointed to seek a replacement.



Brave face: Liam Strong (above) has the strong public support of the Sears chairman, Sir Bob Reid. Photograph: FT

But Mr Strong has enjoyed the very public support of the Sears chairman, Sir Bob Reid.

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**You are better off buying a lottery ticket than shares in Sears**

Some institutional shareholders also feel that removing Mr Strong would serve little purpose. They say the group's disparate collection of businesses,

which includes the Selfridges department store, the Wallis and Warehouse fashion chains and a raft of shoe shops such as Dolcis, Shoe Express and Cable & Co, is fundamentally flawed.

Though Selfridges is regarded as a gem, the shoe companies act as a drag on profits.

N Brown's shares returned from suspension yesterday and closed 10p higher at 387.5p.

It is understood that the company did have bank finance in place to fund the Freemans deal.

The group denied yesterday that some of its shareholders had been unhappy about the size of the Freemans deal, which would have transformed its share of the mail order market.

Comment, page 25

## £50m rise in Deutsche bill for MGAM

John Wilcock

Deutsche Bank revealed yesterday that it took a £430m hit on its 1996 accounts due to the Peter Young scandal at its Morgan Grenfell Asset Management (MGAM) arm, some £50m more than previously indicated.

When the scandal emerged the giant German bank, Europe's largest, minimised bad publicity by immediately agreeing to compensate all clients of Mr Young's funds last year.

But it still awaits an imminent fine, expected to be over £1m, from the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (Imro), the industry regulator.

Trading in three MGAM funds was suspended in September following the discovery of irregularities in the valuations in some of the unit trusts managed by Mr Young. Deutsche responded by making a record compensation offer, the bulk of which should be paid to investors by April.

Mr Young was sacked by the firm and is under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). Mr Young has said he is not guilty of any criminal activity and that he is being made a scapegoat for internal failings.

Deutsche also stepped in with a £180m cash injection to buy out the suspect securities and ensure the funds could continue trading last September.

Deutsche Bank's chairman Hilmar Kopper announced the bank's annual results yesterday, including the cost of the Young saga. "At the moment we have

just made provisions. The final calculation of the cost has not been completed but we are expecting it to be DM1.1 to 1.2bn."

"The DM1.2bn rise in extraordinary expenses reflects the precautions we took in connection with the damages at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management," he added. "Those are offset by profits from investments of roughly the same amount."

The bank enjoyed a 4.6 per cent increase in 1996 pre-tax profit. Deutsche Bank shares rose 2.5 per cent as investors welcomed its forecast that earnings would rise in 1997, based on trading in the first three months of the year.

Deutsche Bank shares closed DM2.3 higher at DM93.70 in Frankfurt.

Operating profit, measured before the MGAM items, soared 38 per cent to DM5.8bn. Analysts had been expecting a hit from MGAM of around DM1bn.

"Near term, the outlook is positive because the breakdown on the figures is a little better than expected," said Matthew Czepieliewicz, an analyst at Salomon Brothers in London. "I think you can also expect them to draw support from pending changes in the tax law."

Georg Kanders, head of finance, banks and insurers at WestLB Research, said that Deutsche Bank's DM1.2bn costs for Morgan Grenfell were "within our expectations. This is a marketing strategy by Deutsche Bank to strengthen their investors' faith. No one got hurt."

## Homes slump is over at last, says Barratt

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Barratt, Britain's second largest housebuilder, said yesterday the seven-year housing recession had come to an end but warned that recent forecasts for house price rises were "overblown".

Sir Lawrie Barratt, the company's founding chairman, said he expected prices to rise in line with earnings growth, but he acknowledged a return to the north/south divide of the 1980s with prices in London and the South-east rising much faster than in the rest of the country.

Frank Eaton, Barratt's chief executive, added that he expected the return to health of the housing market to continue regardless of which party won the election on May 1.

"The policies regarding housing for both parties are very similar. We believe the market is set to continue," he added.

Barratt's comments on house prices followed a report earlier this week from the Economic and Social Research Council which concluded that house prices were being chased up partly by a fundamental flaw in the way surveyors value them as part of the sales process.

Its research found that disclosing the proposed selling price to valuers before they conducted a valuation significantly biased their decision. Valuations tended to "prove"



Building confidence: Sir Lawrie Barratt expects the market to improve further but warned about 'overblown' forecasts

the transaction price, with 70 per cent of valuations matching the agreed price in order to ensure deals went ahead.

Barratt's optimism for the housing market followed a 30 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the six months to December to £24.8m.

After an 8 per cent rise in earnings per share to 7p, the interim dividend was increased by 9 per cent to 3p.

Barratt's shares, which have recovered from a low of 36p during 1992 after the company plunged into the red and called Sir Lawrie back from retirement to restore its fortunes, closed 3p higher yesterday at 265.5p.

During the period, Barratt completed 3,362 houses, an increase of 12 per cent, and said it was well on track to meet its target of 11,000 houses a year by 2000. This year it expects to complete 7,800 houses compared with last year's 7,000.

The sales were made at an average selling price of £84,200, 3 per cent higher than in the comparable period, which Barratt said reflected a greater proportion of houses sold in the South, where average prices were just over £100,000.

Reservations since the beginning of the year have been running 21 per cent ahead of last year, Barratt said, with advance sales reservations and contracts currently amounting to over £200m.

Investment Column, page 26

## Pound surges after American rate rise

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

The pound surged yesterday in the aftermath of the first increase in US interest rates for two years. Investors expect that the strong economy will force rates up on this side of the Atlantic too, although probably not until after the election.

Better-than-expected trade figures and a very successful auction of gilt-edged stock yesterday also helped boost the pound against both the German mark and the dollar.

During the day it passed the DM2.75 level for the first time in three weeks, ending about a

pfennig higher at DM2.7497. Against the dollar it gained just over half a cent to reach \$1.6190.

"It's just a matter of time before the UK has to put up rates after the Fed's move," said Jeremy Hawkins, chief economist at the Bank of America.

The Federal Reserve said it had decided to raise the cost of borrowing by a quarter point "in light of persisting strength in demand, which is progressively increasing the risk of inflationary imbalances".

This is exactly the reasoning behind the Bank of England's advice to increase UK base rates, which has been so far

refused by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

Trade figures yesterday showed little sign that the strong pound had affected the balance of payments in January.

The whole world deficit in trade in goods narrowed from £825m in December to £641m, the best monthly figure for more than a year.

However, the non-European Union deficit widened last month, to £534m from £339m in January. Economists saw this as a sign of the underlying deterioration in Britain's trade position due to the strength of the currency.

"These figures are just

flattering to deceive," said David Walton, an economist at the investment bank Goldman Sachs.

City analysts warned that the trade numbers would worsen as the year progressed.

There was evidence for this in the growth of underlying export and import volumes. In the year to January, exports grew by 5.9 per cent and import volumes by 8 per cent. Imports have picked up as exports have slowed.

The improvement in the headline figures is most likely due to what economists call the "J-curve" effect - the fact that a strong pound reduces sterling

import prices before the full effect on trade volumes feeds through.

The Fed's move was justified by figures yesterday showing another big jump in durable goods orders in the US last month.

They increased by 1.5 per cent in February, following a 4.1 per cent jump the previous month. Much of the rise came in orders for electrical equipment.

"The Fed may feel compelled to raise rates again at the FOMC meeting in late May or early July," warned Christopher Low of HSBC Markets in New York.

## Krupp to bear brunt of 8,000 job cuts after merger

A merger of the steel divisions of Krupp-Hoesch and Thyssen will cost 8,000 jobs but both German companies yesterday promised striking workers that they would not impose any compulsory redundancies.

Thyssen said it would announce details of the merger today after a compromise averting a hostile takeover bid launched by Krupp last week.

"Workforce reductions will definitely be carried out with social compensation," said Hans-Wilhelm Grasshoff, chairman of steel unit Krupp-Hoesch Stahl. "We rule out any forced lay-offs under this steel plan."

Eckehard Schulz, chairman of Thyssen Stahl, which will take a 60 per cent stake in, and industrial control of, the new company, also said he did not plan compulsory redundancies and added that the brunt of the job cuts would hit Krupp.

"We will not sign the merger

contract if one thing is not guaranteed by Krupp-Hoesch by tonight," Mr Schulz said as he sought to assure a workforce that has protested for a week throughout the Ruhr Valley.

"The costs that arise by ruling out forced lay-offs must not be borne by the new company or by Thyssen," he added, a clear indication that Thyssen would seek to make Krupp pay for its unwanted takeover bid.

Half of the planned job reductions have already been agreed in areas where the two firms already co-operate. The additional 4,000 job cuts would largely hit Krupp-Hoesch's Dortmund steel works.

The merger would take four years to complete and create a producer with an annual capacity of 15 million tonnes of crude steel, putting it third in Europe behind British Steel and France's Usinor-Sacilor. It would become Europe's biggest

maker of flat steel products, whose key customers are Europe's car makers.

The new company, to be named Ruhrstahl, will have a workforce of around 18,000, compared with a combined total of 26,000 now. It will transform Thyssen's Duisburg steel works into one of the world's biggest and most modern integrated mills, while Krupp-Hoesch becomes more of an extended workbench for the new firm.

Wolfgang Clement, economics minister in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia where Krupp and Thyssen are based, said he expected a memorandum of understanding on the merger to be signed soon.

Mr Clement, who intervened to save off Krupp's DM13.6bn (£3.1 bn) cash bid for Thyssen, said the two companies would invest up to DM1bn in Krupp's Dortmund steel works.

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)	Index	Close	Day's change
FTSE 100	4301.50	+30.60	+0.7	4444.30	3632.30	3.75	Nikkei	10000	+100
FTSE 250	4566.50	+15.90	+0.3	4729.40	4015.30	3.51			
FTSE 350	2122.90	+13.80	+0.6	2194.30	1816.60	3.70			
FT Small Cap	2012.40	+0.71	+0.0	2374.20	1954.05	2.99			
FT All Share	2094.09	+12.37	+0.6	2163.94	1791.95	3.04			
New York	6901.47	+23.30	+0.4	7065.16	5032.94	1.89			
Tokyo	18472.45	+32.84	+0.2	22555.00	17393.65	0.87			
Hong Kong	12776.39	-56.14	-0.4	13868.24	10294.87	3.91			
Frankfurt	3416.12	+68.30	+2.1	3460.64	2253.30	1.57			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates
1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month
4.00	6.94	7.50	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00
4.00	6.94	7.50	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00
4.00	6.94	7.50	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00
4.00	6.94	7.50	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00	6.94	4.00

CURRENCIES									
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	£/A\$	£/NZ\$	£/HK\$	£/SG\$	£/INR	£/B\$	£/R\$
1.6190	2.7497	161.90	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
1.6190	2.7497	161.90	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
1.6190	2.7497	161.90	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67

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Levi's is rattled. Its stylised advertising has persuaded generations of teenagers to pay top-dollar for an image as much as an item of clothing. Price competition could bring the cosy set-up crashing down

## Lord MacLaurin takes on the jeans machine

It was only a matter of time before a supermarket began selling that ultimate icon of classless, late 20th century fashion, Levi 501 jeans. It was inevitable that the chain in question should be Lord MacLaurin's Tesco, the trend-setter in so much of the retail revolution that has blown through the high street. It goes without saying that hefty price cuts would be involved. And it was utterly predictable that Levi Strauss & Co would cry foul.

Its jeans, as they say, are shrunk to fit, but not on to supermarket shelves alongside the loo rolls and dried pasta. Where are the staff trained in the art of selling "jeanswear"? Where is the groovy music? And where, more to the point, are the margins? Levi's has no desire to set retail prices, no store, but if everyone goes around knocking £25 off the price of its best stonewashed denim then where will it all end?

It should prove an interesting battle. The supermarkets have successfully targeted books, over-the-counter medicines, petrol and compact discs. You can bank with them, you can buy on credit with them and, if your taste in shopping runs to the Co-op, you can literally go from the cradle to the grave with them.

But Levi jeans are different. As the discount supermarkets discovered a couple of years back when they tried to sell posh perfumes at half price, bell hats no fury like the fragrance house that sees its brand being devalued.

Jeans, however, are different, or at least

they ought to be, and Levi's defences could prove shaky. If it takes a diploma in "jeanswear" to sell a pair of 501s then why can they be bought by catalogue? The answer is because Littlewoods and Freemans charge £24.99 for a pair of mail order 501s compared with the £22 charged at the official Levi's Store in Regent Street.

Tesco is now proposing to knock them out for £30 a throw and still make a £5 profit. It would like to sell a range of styles at different prices – another of Levi's pre-conditions. But the only concession it has so far been able to get its hands on is a shipment of 45,000 pairs of stonewashed red, black and yellow, button-up fly, 501s from a supplier in Mexico.

You can see why Levi's is rattled. Its stylised advertising has persuaded generations of teenagers to pay top-dollar for an image as much as an item of clothing. Levi Strauss has lived high on the hog but price competition could bring the whole cosy set-up crashing down. A nation of parents will be cheering Lord MacLaurin on from the sidelines.

### Strong is selling from a weak position

This time it is certain for Liam Strong. Definitely maybe. The chief executive of Sears has survived so many close shaves that he is finally pushed out of the stores group

he would surely get a job with Victor Kiam. Can Mr Strong survive the latest setback, the collapse of his plans to sell Sears' mail order business, Freemans, to Sir David Alliance's N Brown group?

Logically, the answer ought to be no. He originally planned to sell the business to Littlewoods but when Littlewoods discovered he was also negotiating with N Brown it pulled out in disgust.

Now Mr Strong is back in talks again with Mr. Littlewoods. The negotiations are described as "exclusive", a redundant phrase since Littlewoods is now the only buyer in town.

Given that it is a buyer's market, it is hard to see how Mr Strong can persuade Littlewoods to part with the £395m it had originally offered to pay for the business back in January. He could of course walk away if the price is too low, but that would mean tearing up his plans to hand the proceeds back to shareholders.

He could strike a deal at a lower price. But even if he agrees to that, the sale will almost certainly head straight for the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Depending on what conditions were imposed, the MMC could either force the price down still further or prove a show stopper altogether.

After the fiasco of Sears' abortive sale of its shoe shops to Stephen Hinchliffe, Mr Strong cannot afford another failure. There was plenty of bluster on offer yesterday. Perhaps Littlewoods will cough up after all.

Perhaps the shoe business will recover. Perhaps the moon is made of green cheese.

If there is a grain of consolation, it is the fact that Sears has lost the capacity to disappoint – hence the indifferent reaction in the share price.

But Mr Strong is running out of room. He has a dwindling hand of supporters in the City but even they must surely be losing patience.

### Final whistle blown on City's latest fad

As excuses for not floating go, the absence of full-time paid executives is as spurious as they come. That, however, was the official line at Sheffield Wednesday yesterday – it was the newest reason for staying private from what claims to be the country's oldest club.

What the spin from Hillsborough was studiously avoiding was an admission that the cold shoulder given to Charlton Athletic last week – its shares collapsed from the 80p offer price to 50p at one point on the first day's dealings – had blown the final whistle on soccer's flirtation with the City.

Football's flirtation with the City has followed a similar pattern to a string of new issue fads in recent years. Improving fundamentals – in this case rising attendances and a game awash in TV cash – paved the way for early successes, tempting others to follow suit and

all the time reducing the quality of the companies on offer until investors finally hauled.

Last year it was hotchies who caught the stock market bug with high-quality offerings like Millennium & Copthorne beating a path for less blue-chip peers like Thistle and Jarvis to follow. By the time investors starting running their slide rules over little Principal Hotels, share prices were dipping below their issue prices and the float was pulled.

The previous year belonged to the Internet when the dramatic success of Netscape's flotation – dealers were expected to start at \$13, instead they hit \$50 – meant anything with the words Net, Web, information or superhighway in the prospectus could, for a short period, earn a favourable hearing. Three years ago the construction sector rode that industry's false dawn but within weeks ran out of steam.

In any industry there are only a limited number of companies with the qualities to make them stand out as an investment from their peers. In football, however, the shortage is unusually acute. Even in the stock market's sillier moments, no one would pretend Charlton's and Manchester United's brand strength, quality of earnings and growth potential are remotely comparable. The Blades realised the game was up for them for now, even though they couldn't quite bring themselves to express it in quite those terms.

## Taxpayers foot '£5bn bill' for rail privatisation

Michael Harrison

Rail privatisation has cost the taxpayer a net £5bn, according to an independent study of the break-up of the industry to be published today.

The study, by a rail economics consultancy, lays most of the blame for the huge bill on the way the industry was divided up into nearly 100 separate businesses on privatisation.

It says that although rail privatisation has raised or saved £13.5bn, the total costs of the programme amount to more than £18bn when sweeteners to private operators and administration costs are taken into account.

The study, the first attempt to assess the financial impact of rail privatisation, says the Government raised £4.5bn in sale proceeds and has saved a further £6bn by cutting subsidies to private train operators.

However, these savings are dwarfed by the extra £7bn cost of running the privatised industry because of its increased complexity, debt write-offs, the undervaluation of Railtrack and one-off transitional costs and sweeteners.

Dr Nigel Harris of the Railways Consultancy, the author of the report, said: "The results indicate that whatever other benefits there may be from a

privatisation process, the financial impact has been negative. Privatising BR in the manner chosen by the Government has cost nearly £5bn. Whatever the exploits of the new operators, it seems very improbable that benefits will be found which exceed these costs."

The figures in the study are based mainly on written parliamentary answers, select committee reports and estimates by the City.

According to the study total grant paid to the railway industry rose to around £2bn in each of the two years before privatisation. The most recent fig-

Rail privatisation – was it worth it?			
Costs	£m	Receipts	£m
One-off transactional costs	1,200	Sale proceeds	4,455
Loss on sale of Railtrack	2,400	Franchise savings	5,985
Railtrack sweeteners	1,089	Tax revenues	1,184
Sweeteners to freight businesses	575	Revenue gained from new investment	159
Debt write-offs	1,223	Asset replacement adjustment	1,712
Revenue lost from delayed investment	425		
Miscellaneous costs	80		
Additional costs of running network	7,104		
Regulatory costs	171		
Access charge adjustment	1,160		
BP efficiency savings at 3% p.a.	-1,952		
Expected economic improvement	684		
TOTAL	18,048	TOTAL	13,495
NET COST	£4,554		

Sources: The Privatisation of British Rail by Dr Nigel J Harris and Ernest Goldsmith

ures from the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising show that total subsidies in the coming financial year will be £1.84bn.

The study puts the cost of preparing the industry for privatisation, including City advisors fees and redundancy charges, at £1.2bn. It also estimates that the £1.9bn sale of Railtrack shortchanged the taxpayer by as much as £2.4bn based on the book value of the company at the time.

However, the study says the biggest costs of privatisation –

put at £7.1bn – are the "interface costs" that result from 96 separate train operators, leasing companies, suppliers, infrastructure companies and engineering and maintenance units having to deal with one another. The Commons Transport Select Committee estimated these costs at £850m a year, says the study.

The figures used by Dr Harris also include the £1.3bn of debt in the industry written off by the Government and the assumed financial benefits that were lost through delays in

upgrading the network while privatisation was being pushed through.

Some of the figures and assumptions used in the study have been challenged by the Government. For instance, it argues that the real value of Railtrack was not its book value but the price investors were prepared to pay.

The figures produced by Dr Harris do not include estimates of the wider economic benefits that could flow from privatisation such as shorter journey times.

## Greenbury has had 'little impact'

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Just 10 per cent of companies have changed their policy on directors' employment contracts since the 1995 Greenbury report on executive pay, the shareholder advisory consultants, Pirc, claimed yesterday.

In its response to a consultation by the Hampel Committee on corporate governance, the successor to the Cadbury Committee headed by ICI chairman Sir Ronnie Hampel, Pirc argued investors had been baffled by a "hizzard of statistics" following the Greenbury codes call for business to publish more information about directors' pay.

The Pirc submission added: "There has been an explosion of detail declared on remuneration, but little direct impact from shareholders in linking pay to performance."

It criticised the "fruit machine effect" of recently introduced long-term bonus schemes (L-

Tips), which claim to link share payouts to executives' performance but in reality "deliver arbitrary results". This year many L-Tip schemes will start paying out large sums in shares to directors, often above the straightforward share option plans they replaced.

Pirc said Big City shareholders were still not taking the opportunity to influence companies' policies by voting on resolutions at annual general meetings. The group argued that institutional investors should be required to make their voting policy public.

The Pirc proposals emerged as British Gas released its annual report, which showed the pay of its directors fell by 11 per cent last year to £3.04m. The report confirmed most senior directors received average pay rises between 3 and 5 per cent from 1 January, information which was made public when the group, now renamed BG Plc, demerged last month.

## Murdoch closes in on deal for US Bible-thumper's family channel

David Osborne  
New York

Tireless in his pursuit of access to the American front room, Rupert Murdoch was said yesterday to be closing in on a deal to buy 40 per cent of International Family Entertainment, owner of the Family Channel cable company.

The deal, if consummated, would give Mr Murdoch's News Corp another vital beachhead in the US television industry. Last month, he shocked entertainment insiders by signing a joint venture deal with the nascent but fast-growing cable broadcaster, EchoStar.

His latest investment, which could cost News Corp some

\$600m, will be important primarily for the opportunities it will give Mr Murdoch to showcase the children's programming of his Fox Television Network.

IFE is controlled by Pat Robertson, the super-powerful religious broadcaster who has in the past also run on a conservative ticket for the US presidency. Previous suitors have balked at a final deal because of the Family Channel's commitment to religious programming. Its flagship religious programme, which airs in prime time in the US, is *The 700 Club*, hosted by Mr Robertson.

But the tabloid *USA Today* reported yesterday that Mr Murdoch would agree to allow the show to retain its slot on the

channel. During the morning and afternoon hours, however, its programming would be given over to the output of his Fox Kids service.

A deal with IFE could give Mr Murdoch a cable base that could give him equal standing with the two other main children's cable enterprises in the US, the Cartoon Network, owned by Time Warner, and Viacom's successful Nickelodeon.

The Family Channel is "one of the few remaining independent cable networks with almost universal distribution", Frederick Moran of Furman Selz, told *USA Today*. "It's a gem of an asset."

Most appealing for Mr Murdoch is the considerable audi-

ence reach already enjoyed by Family. According to latest cable industry figures, it penetrates 59 million homes in the US, compared with 60.8 million for Nickelodeon and a much smaller 28.3 million for the Cartoon Network.

Any deal with IFE would reveal a twin-track bet by Mr Murdoch on both cable and satellite broadcasting in the US. It would be a strategy designed to guarantee him the broadest possible access to viewers regardless of whether his hopes for satellite TV take off or not.

Analysis predicted, however, that news of Mr Murdoch's approach to IFE would prompt other broadcast players to try to block him.

## Wolfson backs son's move on to Next board

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

Next chairman Lord Wolfson yesterday defended the appointment of his 29-year-old son Simon Wolfson to the board of the retail group and said he had received no complaints from investors.

Lord Wolfson said he did not expect any objection from institutions at Next's annual meeting in May "unless the shareholders have had a collective bout of insanity". He added: "I have spoken to our institutional investors and they are not remotely worried about it."

Lord Wolfson said the fact that Simon Wolfson was his son had probably delayed his elevation to the board. "If anything, the appointment is overdue and premature. In my view they [Next] have had him far too long."

However, Pirc, the corporate governance lobbying group, has expressed concerns about the appointment which was announced last month. Pirc said

yesterday it would wait to receive the Next annual report before deciding whether to raise an objection at the AGM.

Simon Wolfson joined Next in 1991 when he was 23. He has been sales and marketing manager of the Next brand since 1993 and is regarded highly by chief executive David Jones, who made the appointment.

Lord Wolfson's forthright comments came as Next reported another set of sparkling results with annual pre-tax profits 12 per cent ahead at £158m. The shares rose 22.5p to 618.5p, close to their record high.

With the high street stores and the Next Directory catalogue enjoying booming sales, the company is pondering a move into financial services. Mr Jones said Next has held talks with possible partners and would make a decision in the next 12 months.

Next is also planning to expand its franchise operations in Japan. Four will open in Japan, four in the Far East, and three in the Middle East, with four more to open in Europe. Next



Family matters: Lord Wolfson (above) said his son's appointment was overdue

is losing money with its four stores in the US but will add one more store there this year. The single store in France is performing below expectations and there are no plans for more. The company said it was not interested in the Littlewoods stores chain, which is up for sale, but may be interested in half a dozen slices. Next is gaining

market share with sales of menswear, women's wear and children's wear all strong. Lord Wolfson brushed aside suggestions of a possible link-up with Great Universal Stores, the mail order retailer where he is also chairman. He said there were no advantages that were immediately apparent. *Investment Column*, page 26

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## business

# Sheffield Wednesday delays plans for flotation

Chris Hughes

Sheffield Wednesday yesterday bucked the recent trend among football clubs by postponing plans to float on the stock market for at least two years.

Instead the Premier League club will proceed with a share placing and open issue to raise £17m that will value The Owls at £42.5m.

"The directors have considered various options including flotation," said the chairman, David Richards. "The objective for the company should be a full listing on the London Stock Exchange but it is likely to be more beneficial to achieve this in two or three years' time."

He said an immediate listing would not be possible because the company's financial performance last year had been worse than that of 1994, though the club declined to give further details. Sheffield Wednesday has yet to appoint full-time executives. The present directors are unpaid.

Nick Batram, an analyst at Greig Middleton, welcomed the postponement as a healthy evolution in the football club

sector. It did not, he believed, foreshadow the beginning of the end for football flotations.

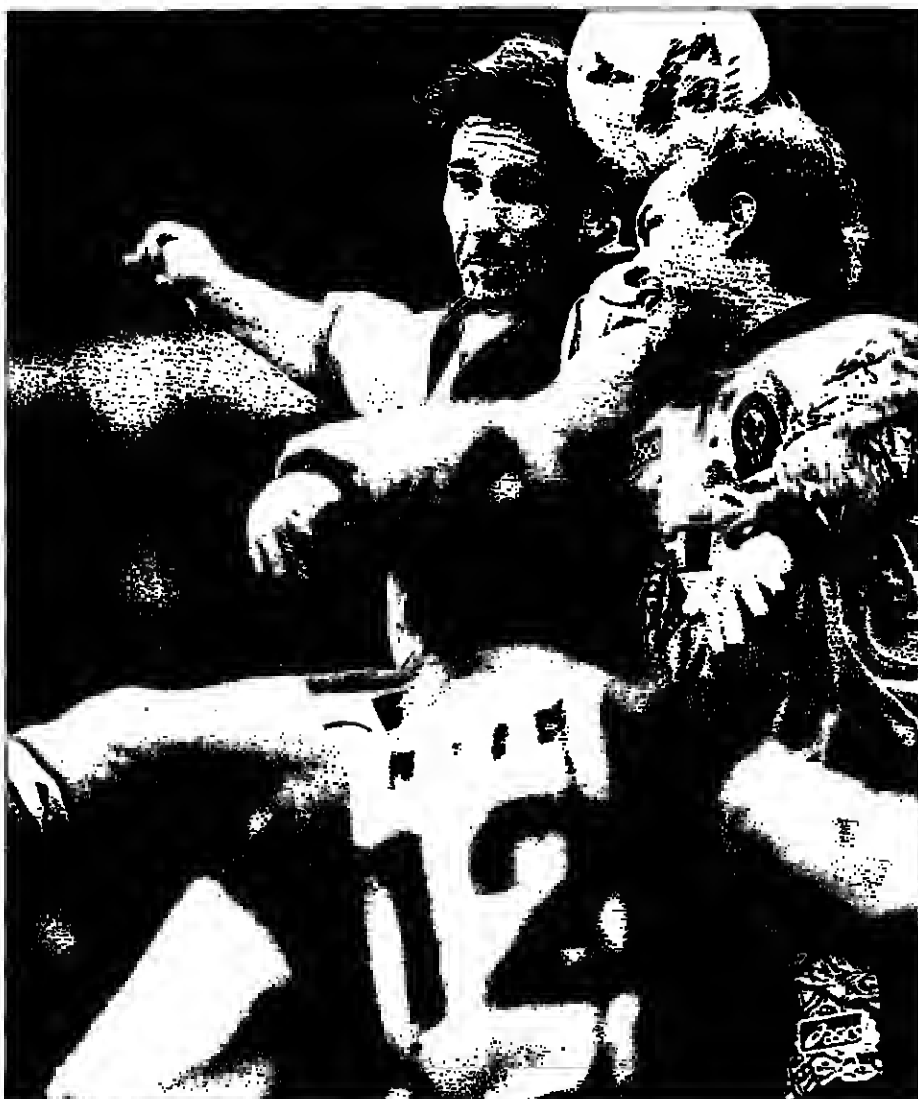
"The sector is maturing and this is a process that any new emerging sector goes through," he said. "Previously, there was a rarity value to football clubs. Now we've got past the hype stage. People are evaluating the clubs as businesses."

Wednesday's caution could pay off in the long term, he said.

In the largest single investment in an English football club by a City institution, Charterhouse Development Capital Funds, part of Charterhouse Bank, is subscribing to £8.5m of the 85p shares, giving it a 20 per cent stake in the club. Charterhouse is also underwriting the issue and will buy up any shares not taken by the public.

The club has three classes of shares which are to be consolidated and traded through a matched bargain dealing facility operated by Charterhouse Tiney, also part of Charterhouse Bank.

Most of the funds raised will be used to buy new players. The rest will go towards improving the training ground, redevel-



Exercising caution: Sheffield Wednesday has opted for a share placing and open issue to raise £17m to buy new players and improve facilities. Photograph: Barry Coombes/Emics

oping the Hillsborough stadium and reducing bank borrowings.

Mr Richards said: "We need to keep competing at the very top level and unless we raise substantial cash it means we will

be buying the £2m player in-

stead of the £6m player."

Fears that football flotations had passed their high-water mark when shares in Charlton Athletic of the First Division collapsed on their first day of trading. Shares in other football clubs, including Birmingham City and Sunderland, are also trading below their offer price.

## Granada clears another hurdle in hotel sale

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Granada cleared another hurdle in its protracted sale of Forté's Exclusive Hotels yesterday, selling New York's Hotel Plaza Athénée on the Upper East Side to TCC, a privately owned Thai conglomerate that operates the Imperial chain of hotels.

The sale, for £42.5m, brings to £400m the gross value of the Exclusive disposals, which have been achieved at an aggregate premium to book value of around 65m.

Granada also confirmed the completion of the recently announced £90m disposal of two Westbury hotels to Elliott Bernerd's Chisfield property group.

The sale of the Plaza Athénée follows recent speculation that Granada was having difficulty securing buyers for several former Forté hotels. It recently took the £350m Grosvenor House hotel in London's Park Lane off the market, claiming it could achieve better value for shareholders by keeping the hotel and improving it.

It is also thought the company is struggling to find buyers for two hotels in Italy and another in Paris that would offer enough to match book value. Granada has said it would rather keep hotels than cut prices.

Despite the reported problems, Granada has achieved good prices on some of its disposals, realising a total of £228m for its prestigious George V hotel in Paris, the Hyde Park in London and Barbados's Sandy Lane, well above their combined book value of £180m.

The latest disposal brings to £1.3bn the total raised from asset sales since the £3.9bn takeover of Forté at the beginning of 1996. These include the Welcome Break chain of motorway service stations for £470m, the White Hart chain of hotels for £122m and Granada's stake in Alpha Airports.

Still on the block remain a 68 per cent stake in the Savoy Group, Browns Hotel in London and a handful of hotels as far afield as Warsaw's Hotel Bristol and the King Edward in Toronto.

During the bitter bid battle for control of Forté, Granada said it would raise £1.3bn by September 1997.

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## World of Leather shares leap on agreed £14m bid from UNO

Clifford German

UNO, the specialist retailer of upholstered furniture, yesterday acquired World of Leather, a smaller rival, in an agreed bid worth £14.3m, which the City thinks will create a more dynamic combination.

Shares in UNO jumped by almost 10 per cent, although it will have to find at least £6m to fund a cash alternative for WOL directors who want out.

The deal brings together two companies from the opposite end of the soft furnishings world. UNO sells low-cost sofas in the £1,000 range from 10 large sites while World of Leather's sofas fetch around £2,000 from 31 much smaller outlets.

UNO is offering 0.43542 of its new shares for each World of Leather share, valuing WOL at 118p based on UNO shares at 271p.

This represents a 41 per cent premium to the market price on Monday, the day before WOL announced it was in bid discussions. UNO's shares subsequently jumped 24p to 295p, however, which now values the paper offer at 128p.

Richard Taylor, WOL's joint managing director and finance director will join the UNO board, while the chairman Ramon Bernadout, Michael Bernadout and the other joint managing director, Peter Sheldon, will stand down.

However, with the exception of Mr Sheldon, the WOL di-

rectors who control 42 per cent of the shares will take an alternative cash offer of 108p rather than UNO's paper.

WOL has been in and out of the black in recent years but yesterday reported a 10 per cent increase in turnover to £32.2m and profit of £1.025m for 1996, compared with a £517,000 loss in 1995. It made a rights issue in 1994 to finance expansion but blamed unfavourable market conditions and high site prices for its sluggish performance.

UNO made a profit before tax of £1.06m in the year to the end of April 1996 on a turnover of £24.2m, followed by a half-time profit of £306,000 in the six months to last November. It is now forecasting a profit of £2.5m before tax and excep-

tional costs of last year's flotation for the year to April 1997.

The terms value the combined businesses at over £50m and will give them 13 per cent of the leather upholstery market, which is expected to grow by 50 per cent over the next four years. UNO plans to invest in World of Leather, but the two businesses will continue to operate in their own market sectors, and retain separate brands.

UNO's chairman and chief executive, Paul Rosenblatt, admitted the acquisition would dilute earnings in the current year but expects the deal to enhance earnings in 1998.

If the deal goes through UNO will seek to transfer from AIM to the main London market.

## IN BRIEF

### Active quarter for MBOs

The management buy-out market shrugged off uncertainties caused by the impending general election to reach a record level of activity in the first quarter of the year, according to figures from accountants KPMG. The value of MBOs and buy-ins reached £1.97bn, up 42 per cent on the same three months last year, while the number of deals worth more than £10m - 29 - was also a record for a time that is traditionally quieter than other periods. Among the largest deals were the £476m buy-out of Welcome Break, the £260m Castle Transmission Services deal and the £103m acquisition of William Cook.

### Soros backs London Clubs bid

George Soros has thrown his weight behind London Clubs' hostile £181m all-paper bid for rival casino operator Capital Corporation. Mr Soros acts as the main investment adviser, Quantum Partners, which yesterday pledged its 2.72 per cent stake in Capital to London Clubs' bid. Total acceptances reached 2.88 per cent and the offer has been extended to 8 April.

### Daimler-Benz bounces back

Daimler-Benz rebounded from a record loss to a higher-than-expected 1996 net profit of DM2.8bn (\$1.67bn) as Germany's largest company wrote off some costs of a record reorganisation. Daimler, which had a record net loss of DM5.7bn in 1995, attributed the increase in net profit in part to the one-time effect of deferred taxes. Daimler proposes a DM1.1 dividend after stripping the pay-out to 1995.

### Nestlé profits rise 17%

Nestlé, the world's largest food and beverage maker, saw 1996 net profits rise by almost 17 per cent, buoyed by growth in emerging markets and the strong dollar. Earnings at the producer of Nescafé instant coffee, Perrier mineral water and Alpro pet foods rose to a record SF3.4bn (\$2.31bn) from SF2.92bn a year earlier, the fifth increase in six years. The rise bettered that of Anglo-Dutch rival Unilever, whose 1996 earnings rose 13 per cent to 3.7bn guilders (\$1.96bn), while net profit at French food company Danone rose 8 per cent to FF3.38bn.

### Management moves at Mackie

Mackie, the engineering group, appointed Sul Sahota chief executive following the resignation yesterday of Peter Long. The executive chairman, Patrick Dougan, is also stepping down, allowing Roger Looker to resume the role of chairman. The management changes came as Mackie posted a loss of £437,000 last year, versus a £3.3m profit in 1995.

### Strong start for McKechnie

McKechnie, the engineering plastics and metal components group, warned about the effects of sterling's recent strength but said trading in the second half had started well. "The British construction and DIY markets, which account for 17 per cent of our sales, are showing signs of recovery," McKechnie said. Pre-tax profits rose by 36 per cent to £28.1m in the six months to January.

### Bloom leaves Premier Land

Desmond Bloom has resigned as chairman and managing director of Premier Land and Lars-Erik Magnusson has been appointed as Mr Bloom's successor. Mr Bloom will receive compensation and benefits of one year's salary.

## OfTel warning to digital operators

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications regulator, yesterday warned he would "pounce" on attempts by digital television services, such as those planned by BSkyB, to use the new technology to discriminate unfairly against the programmes of rival programme makers.

However, unveiling his final plans to regulate the multi-channel digital television, it emerged that the regulator will have no power initially over a similar digital service planned by the cable companies. BSkyB and some cable operators aim to launch competing digital services later this year.

They could provide hundreds of channels, raising concerns that existing terrestrial broadcasters could see their offerings swamped. Programme makers have been concerned at the terms for accessing the "set-top boxes" which decode digital signals in the home.

Mr Cruickshank is writing to broadcasters and content providers requesting internal information on the planned services. "I'm anxious there are the makings of a very long, drawn out negotiation here," he said.

Electronic programme guides, which act as computerised index systems, were "a big problem," said Mr Cruickshank and could be used to steer consumers towards particular channels.

## Caradon hands back £174m to shareholders

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Caradon is to hand £174m back to its shareholders, in effect passing on the proceeds of last December's disposal of the building materials group's European engineering and distribution business.

News of the capital refund accompanied an 18 per cent rise in underlying profits last year to £178.2m which lifted the shares 3.5p to 277p despite a warning that trading so far in 1997 had been below expectations.

Peter Jansen, chief executive, said difficult conditions for its plumbing, electrical and joinery businesses in 1995 continued into last year with the improvement in profits driven by cost reduction programmes that had offset volume reductions and lower prices.

But he added that strong cashflow meant the group could hand money back to shareholders without straining its

balance sheet, which had £96m of net cash at the year-end.

Even if the cash had already been handed back to shareholders by the balance sheet date, group gearing would have been a comfortable 19 per cent, the company said.

Caradon said it would effect the return by issuing a new class of "B" shares to existing ordinary and preference shareholders in return for replacing every 10 shares held with nine new ones. The "B" shares can be redeemed for cash between 30 May and 17 June.

Mr Jansen said Caradon had made cost savings of £66m through a reorganisation plan ahead of its initial target of £50m. "That underpinning the strength of our performance in markets that were less good than we expected," Caradon expects to cut costs by an additional £25m-£40m in 1997.

Mr Jansen said giving money back to shareholders still left Caradon with substantial fire-

power to make acquisitions and he singled out Germany, where the company already owns 80 per cent of Werni, the country's largest window and door maker.

Continued sluggishness in European markets remained a problem. "1997 has started slowly, with trading in the early months generally below expectations," Mr Jansen noted.

In plumbing, Caradon reported flat operating profits of £37.4m after strong growth in UK radiator and boiler sales were offset by difficult trading on the Continent. The electrical division, where Caradon owns the MK plugs brand, saw a 14 per cent decline in profits to £33.2m, while profits from the structural and engineering units were little improved at £22.3m.

The best performance came from security printing, where volume growth and cost reductions helped profits rise 13 per cent to £42.8m, and doors and windows, which swung into £4.7m profits from a £15m loss.

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

## Next stays streets ahead of rivals with 12% rise in profits

Next's chief executive, David Jones, liked his company's latest set of results so much he set his dark business suit off with a vivid orange shirt in sartorial celebration. No matter that he looked like a Liquorice Allsort, you could hardly blame him for putting on the style.

The Next phenomenon runs on and on and the new fashion for bold-coloured men's shirts is just one area where Next has got its buying just right. There may be a feel-good factor in the economy but Next's results are still high streets ahead of rival retailers.

Pre-tax profits were 12 per cent ahead at £158m and both the high street stores and the Next Directory catalogue are firing on all cylinders. Sales at the stores were 20 per cent ahead on increased selling space of 7 per cent. Next Directory achieved a 31 per cent sales increase and the performance in both areas has continued into current trading.

Next continues to squeeze higher sales per square foot from its high street space with the figure rising from £483 to £606 over the past two years. Analysts agree that there is still more to go for and the group will open 75,000 more square feet of space this year, representing a 7 per cent increase on the total.

Next may snap up some of the Littlewoods sites but is not going to bid for the whole chain of 135 stores.

The company is still trading carefully in France and the United States but is set to expand its franchise stores from 30 to 45 next year with more outlets in Japan, the Far East, the Middle East and Europe. With losses reducing in the US, Next hopes to generate profits of several million from its franchises in two or three years.

Another area of opportunity is financial services. Next has been talking to possible partners and is likely to make its first foray into the market in the next 12 months. Credit cards are likely to be the first product launch but Next seems keen on the M&S approach to the sector, which could mean BEPs and pensions too. This will be a useful add-on to Next's core business but is not likely to be a large profit contributor in the short term. So while Next looks set fair

for the next few years it will soon have to start thinking about a big strategic move if it is not to run out of steam. The £165m cash pile will provide a useful war chest.

There is little doubt that in a strong clothing market Next is the quality stock of the sector. The shares have performed amazing feats in the past five or six years and on analysts' profit forecasts of £186m for this year, they trade at a forward rating of 18 times. Though this sector is strewn with banana skins, this seems a deserved premium. Still worth holding.

### Expectations build at Barratt

Neither Sir Lawrie Barratt nor his highly regarded chief executive, Frank Eaton, are prone to outbursts of enthusiasm but you didn't have to look too hard between the lines of yesterday's interim statement to realise the housing market is in rude health once more and Barratt in pole position to benefit from its recovery from seven long years of recession.

Profits of £24.8m, a 30 per cent rise, provided firm evidence that Barratt is well on track to dominate the volume end of the housing market again. It buys land well, builds on it efficiently and, thanks to a popular part-exchange

scheme, sells quickly. A target of 11,000 houses a year seemed fanciful last year but now looks achievable, a fitting swan-song for Sir Lawrie, who at 70 is preparing for his second retirement.

Barratt has carved itself a good position in the South-east, where the company reckons all the action is. Despite pouring cold water on recent forecasts of booming house prices, Barratt admits that in on a forward rating of 18 times. Though this sector is strewn with banana skins, this seems a deserved premium. Still worth holding.

Staging a £90m rights issue last May represented unbeatable timing, allowing Barratt to build its land bank at a sensible price. During the half-year land was bought at just 23.8 per cent of expected selling price, an impressive ratio that stores up potential profits. That reflects the company's skill in buying brown sites, land that had a previous use before being turned into housing plots.

Reservations running more than 20 per cent ahead of last year and advance contracts worth over £200m mean analysts' forecasts that profits will reach £68m this year and £81.5m next time should prove conservative. On those figures, the shares, which have moved sideways for a year after a stunning outperformance since 1992, trade on a prospective p/e ratio of 14 falling to 11.5. At 266p, up 3.5p, they look good value.

### Next: At a glance

Market value: £2.3bn, share price 618.5p

Trading record:	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	494.1	544.2	622.9	774.8	946.8
Operating profit (£m)	38.9	73.5	107.4	141.9	158.8
Pre-tax profits (£m)	38.9	73.5	107.4	141.9	158.8
Dividends per share (p)	2.50	5.30	9.00	11.75	15.00

Source: Data compiled by The Investment Column

## Surge in poster ads boosts Maiden

Maiden, the outdoor poster specialist which came to the market last May, is riding high on the back of the surge in advertising spend in general and the popularity of its electronic outdoor poster sites in particular. Spending on the outdoor poster market grew 10 per cent last year and posters have increased their share of the display advertising market from 4.7 per cent in 1993 to 6 per cent, proving an effective competitor for TV.

Maiden's turnover surged by 51 per cent to £55.1m last year, and with margins rising from 16 to 17 per cent, operating profits before exceptional leaps an impressive 62 per cent to £9.5m.

Moving the head office created a £700,000 exceptional property charge but this was offset by a 45 per cent cut in interest charges to £1.7m, and profit before tax tripled to £6.85m. A leap in the tax charge held earnings per share before exceptional to 13.6p and the group is paying a final dividend of 3.6p.

The results are below the optimistic £8m the

four broking houses who follow the stock had expected, but Maiden's chief executive, Ron Zephire, painted a glowing picture of prospects. With almost 26,000 sites, nearly 20 per cent of them illuminated, Maiden is one of the largest outdoor advertising companies and the market leader in the large format poster sector.

The group spent over £4m on its sites last year, including £1m on the illumination of 800 sites. £1.5m on a new network of back-lit sites and £300,000 on an acquisition. It recently signed an agreement with Safeway which will extend its presence in the small six-panel poster market. Yesterday it renewed its concession with Railtrack until March 2004.

Capital expenditure will at least equal last year's but analysts are still looking for a profit of £10-11m this year and earnings of 17-18p a share. The shares rose 7.5p to 324p yesterday, between 18 and 19 times forecast earnings for the current year. The outlook is bright but that rating factors in much of the good news.

### Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Arundale Group (F)	43.4m (79.3m)	1.07m (-5.3m)	3.85p (11.62p)	1p (1p)
Barratt Development (F)	311m (277m)	24.8m (18.1m)	7p (8.5p)	3p (2.6p)
Barclay's Development (F)	24.3m (21.5m)	0.49m (0.38m)	4.82p (2.41p)	1.3p (1.05p)
Biochempharm (F)	11.1m (17.5m)	-18.5m (-18.8m)	-33.5p (-19.8p)	-
AVC Bank (F)	723m (888m)	0.97m (0.58m)	22.8p (25.7p)	14p (14p)
British Franchise (F)	79.4m (78.3p)	3.57m (3.17m)	7.64p (7.25p)	4.3p (-)
Cardiff (F)	2.11m (2.05m)	152m (144m)	15.9p (9.2p)	8.5p (-)
Carroll (F)	25.7m (28.5m)	2.84m (4.84m)	12.25p (20.93p)	-
City Technology (F)	8.5m (7.5m)	3.5m (2.8m)	4.76p (3.3p)	1.45p (-)
Clifford (F)	160m (128m)	5.5m (3.8m)	17.9p (12.65p)	6.15p (5.1p)
GLS Holdings (F)	-	10.3m (8.3m)	8.7p (7.8p)	5.5p (5.25p)
Grange (F)	448m (469m)	45.8m (36.4m)	23.8p (20.7p)	10p (9.25p)
Grange (F)	32.8m (-)	-0.89m (-0.89m)	-0.21p (-0.37p)	-
Harrogate (F)	99.1m (82.3m)	9.27m (10.5m)	19.5p (22.87p)	8p (8p)
Palmer (F)	22.1m (20.8p)	4.1m (4.18m)	11.3p (13.6p)	4.6p (-)
AI Systems (F)	101m (81.5m)	3.77m (3.45m)	24.75p (22.87p)	4.05p (3.75p)
Hammond Group (F)	55.3m (52.2m)	9.35m (7.85m)	6.3p (5.2p)	4.05p (4.95p)
Harrods Small Acquisitions (F)	91.3m (80.2m)	4.82m (3.25m)	12p (10.2p)	nt (-)
Johnson Group (F)	151m (138m)	5.7m (6.8m)	30.84p (24.73p)	12p (11.8p)
Just Group (F)	2.43m (1.83m)	0.21m (0.31m)	0.11p (0.20p)	nt (-)
Lavender Group (F)	12.3m (8.8m)	2.71m (1.8m)	13.76p (10.66p)	1.1p (-)
McKerrell (F)	223m (208m)	28.1m (21.8m)	19.6p (16.2p)	5p (-)
Macleod (F)	17.7m (27.7m)	-0.44m (3.27m)	-4.8p (30.5p)	3.7p (11p)
Maiden Group (F)	55.1m (51.3m)	8.85m (8.23m)	12p (-)	3.6p (-)
Medco (F)	63.6m (61.3m)	3.44m (2.38m)	14.9p (15.26p)	4p (3.9p)
Off-Market (F)	72.5m (68.4m)	0.77m (0.67m)	1.4p (1.2p)	-
Off-Market (F)	26.0m (22.2m)	0.16m (0.14m)	1.4p (1.2p)	7.1p (6.63p)
Orbita Group (F)	386m (328m)	5.2m (3.8m)	14.5p (12.5p)	-
Rafael (F)	211m (240m)	1.2m (0.8m)	7.2p (12.1p)	7p (6.25p)
Spry (F)	290m (300m)	-36.8m (-45.3m)	-4.2p (-4.8p)	nt (-)
Sumo (F)	345m (262m)	-3.87m (-7.8m)	-7.4p (-11.5p)	2.5p (2.5p)
Thames (F)	38.5m (38.1m)	2.82m (2.11m)	6.37p (6.94p)	2.7p (2.7p)
FW Thomas (F)	11.3m (10.8m)	1.21m (1.26m)	6.25p (6.25p)	1.2p (1.25p)
TLS (F)	32.4m (40.8m)	5.81m (4.15m)	9.9p (7.3p)	3.4p (2.7p)
UK Safety (F)	30.2m (27.2m)	0.28m (1.4m)	1.3p (1.3p)	-
Unicom (F)	102m (104m)	7.31m (6.03m)	16.8p (24.8p)	6.15p (-)
Whitson (F)	85.4m (81.2m)	12.1m (8.3m)	13.2p (22.3p)	13p (-)
Wolfeborough (F)	80.8m (75.8m)	5.51m (7.53m)	44.3p (55p)	25.5p (-)
(F) = Final (D) = Interim		(-) = comparative figure not available		



## market report / shares

مكتبات الأصل

## Data Bank

FTSE 100  
4301.5 +30.5

FTSE 250  
4568.6 +15.9

FTSE 350  
2122.9 +13.5

SEAQ VOLUME  
949.4m shares

67,755 bargains

Gifts Index  
92.92 -0.08

## Share spotlight

380

220

## Storehouse smacks into 'wall of negative sentiment'

The Storehouse retailing chain suffered another analytical setback, cutting the shares 10p to 235.5p, lowest for two years.

After being maulled by BZW and NatWest Securities this year the BHS and Mothercare group found itself the victim of an SBC Warburg profits downgrade. The securities house is thought to have lowered its estimates for the year ending on Tuesday by £4m to £118m. It appears poor children's clothing sales last month prompted Warburg to trim its forecast.

Last year Storehouse produced £108.7m Profit before tax, despite what appeared to be reasonably encouraging Christmas trading statement. Gradually been reduced. At one time there were hopes this year's figures would nudge £130m.

What has been described as a City "wall of negative sentiment" has taken its toll on the

shares. In May they were riding at 361p.

The latest Storehouse discomfort occurred as Next, on results, jumped 22.5p to 618.5p and Marks & Spencer, reflecting Warburg support, put on 17.5p to 481.5p.

The rest of the stock market for the second day running ignored election rumblings and higher interest rates. The US hike came as something of a relief. After intense speculation a rise of only one-quarter of a point, the first increase for two years, is regarded as comfortably containable.

Positive, therefore, was at one time showing a 49.5-point advance. With New York displaying signs of hesitancy the gain was trimmed back to 30.8 points at 4,301.5 by the close.

Banks managed to shrug off UBS caution. Barclays ended with a 14p gain to 1,030.5p and Lloyds TSB rose 14p to 496.5p.



## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Energy Group, the Hanson spin-off, was the best-performing blue chip, gaining 18p to 489.5p on Goldman Sachs support.

EMI, on continuing competition worries, spun to a new low of 1.097.5p at the time of the demerger last summer the price was 1.486p. Granada's £42.5m New York hotel sale left the shares 10p off at 918p. Biosciences International, the healthcare group, gained 67.5p to 1.157.5p. It has acquired the rights to develop new surface compounds which should extend the life of its own technology. Drew Scientific gained 19p to 79p following a bullish statement. Shares are

being placed with institutions at 53p.

Glaxo Wellcome gained 24.5p to 1,101.5p as ABN Amro Hoare Govett hoisted a 1.260p valuation.

Avis, the car hire group, appeared in its when issued form, trading at 131.5p against a 134p launch. Whitehead Mann, a recruitment group placed at 136p, reached 144.5p. Glenchewton, the household goods group, announced the sale of its Country Style chain for £10.75m. Buyer is the Old English Pub Co. The deal left Glenchewton 7.5p down at 64.5p and OEPC a shade easier at 121.5p. World of Leather, the fur-

niture retailer, jumped 30p to 121.5p on the agreed £14.7m offer from UNO, up 24p at 295p.

Dunton, the bricks and property group run by entrepreneur David Williams, returned to market after capturing Remote Metering Systems, which reads electricity meters remotely, in a £20m reverse takeover. The shares, placed at 100p for the deal, ended at 155.5p.

Princedale, where Hillsdown Holdings founder Sir Harry Solomon is an executive director, firmed 3p to 44p following the £3m sale of design and marketing operations. The company intends to concentrate on producing retail display units. Simon Engineering improved 4p to 43.5p on takeover speculation and the feeling Dalgely could turn out to be the Associated British Foods bid target lifted the shares 11.5p to 349p.

Oils were firm with Enterprise Oil, not for the first time, leading the pack. The shares rose 14.5p to 653.5p. British Petroleum Syndicate firmed 29p to 1,477.5p.

Polydore, one of the second-line operations with strong Dutch connections, gained 33p to 337.5p. The shares were 47.5p in January. The obscure software group was floated last summer by stockbroker Bell Lawrie White at 65p.

Thomas Jourdan, the mini conglomerate embracing the Corby trouser press subsidiary, moved ahead 4p to a 12-month peak of 34.5p. David Abell, who netted £10m when his Suter conglomerate was taken over by Asot Holdings, has appeared on the share register. There have been reports he does not intend to bid but some speculators find it hard to believe such an experienced campaigner would adopt such a negative approach.

Ashtur Technology, one of the more obscure AIM companies, added 5p to 65p on its gold adventure in the Ukraine. The company, which also has a Canadian quote, is involved in five projects with indicated reserves of between an astonishing 500 and 600 tonnes of gold. Other prospects are said to be available. Besides its golden link, Ashtur, a company which seems remarkably shy and offers very little information about itself despite its AIM listing, is developing various alloys.

CFS, a computer group, rallied 8p to 64.5p after declaring it knew of "no reason" for the fall in its share price. It intends to issue year's results, as scheduled, next month. Last year it produced £385,000. The shares have fallen from the 126p hit last year.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where noted. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: 1. Ex rights 2. Ex dividend 3. All in United Securities Market a suspended Parity Paid pm Nil Paid Shares: 2 AIM Stock Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below:

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UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	39
Foreign Exchange	03	Telco Market	21	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a land-line telephone can use the service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 070 870 070 (9am - 5pm).

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000
British Steel	270000	NatWest Bank	65000	Marks & Spencer	65000	Barron	65000
Glaxo	150000	BT	150000	BT	80000	General Elect	65000
BS	120000	Harrods	95000	Seas	95000	Bank of Scotland	65000
Telecom	100000	Royal Sun Alliance	95000	Seas	95000	Bank of Scotland	65000
BT	100000	Thom	85000	Woolworth	75000	Gurness	65000

## FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open	4261.1 down 85	11:00	4304.4 up 297	14:00	4307.7 up 380
High	4261.1	4304.4	4307.7	4307.7	4307.7
Low	4261.1	4304.4	4307.7	4307.7	4307.7
Close	4261.1	4304.4	4307.7	4307.7	4307.7

Alcoholic Beverages		Banks, Merchant		Banks, Retail		Diversified Industrials		Breweries, Pubs & Rest		Building/Construction		Electronics		Food Manufacturers		Gas Distribution		Health Care		Household Goods		Insurance		Chemicals	
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## business

# Mainstream economics needs to get a firm grip on reality

Economics prides itself on being the "hard" social science. Economists boast that it is based on numbers and mathematical analysis, and gets to grips with reality in a way in which the "soft" social sciences such as sociology and political science can not.

It is odd, then, that economists cannot easily accommodate some pretty basic features of reality, such as the fact that there are two different types of people, women and men. Or perhaps this is not so surprising, given the fact that economists regard words like bigger, firmer and higher as unqualified terms of praise. For it turns out to be a pretty macho sort of subject all round.

Take the numbers of women and men in the profession itself. A survey carried out by the Royal Economics Society, whose results were presented at its annual conference this week, found that females are in a minority. Just over a quarter of undergraduate and postgraduate students of the subject are women. They make up less than a fifth of the total number of academic economists in our universities, and the female-male ratio falls sharply the higher up the promotional ladder you look.

According to Professor Denise Osborn of the University of Manchester, who chaired the RES working party: "The more prestigious the economics department, the lower the proportion of women at senior level."

The ratio of women economists to men is also less than a fifth in the government economic service and about one in seven in economics jobs in business (mainly the City). Does this imbalance matter any more than it does elsewhere in our unequal society? The answer is yes, according to Tony Lawson, a Cambridge economist and author of a book critical of the subject's philosophical foundation.

"Surely it is only a group of men who could have produced and persisted with the absurdity that is mainstream economics?" he says. He charges that economics misrepresents the nature of reality, misunderstands the way we find out about reality and uses inappropriate methods for its exploration.

Take the nature of reality first. Economics is based on "rational agents" - individuals or companies - maximising their own individual well-being according to fixed rules. They act by themselves in their own interest. This is what allows the construction of precise mathematical models of behaviour. It permits economists to predict that if event X happens then event Y will follow because every agent is behaving in a well-defined way.

Dr Lawson points out that this does not allow economists to explain why men and women, say, or employers and employees, might behave differently. Economics can only assume they have different preferences; it cannot explain them. Based on building up from individual agents and their preferences, it cannot handle the fact that a lot of people's economic choices are based on their social positions that they are a worker rather than a boss, a student and not a teacher, female not male.

If you accept this argument that mainstream economics completely misrepresents reality, it follows that the notion that an economist just has to collect and interpret objective data falls by the wayside too. Economists tend to venerate statistics as admittedly imperfect snapshots of the reality out there they try to model. The main-



Diane Coyle

Economists believe that without a wider acceptance of the place of history and culture, the profession is digging its own grave

stream does not accept that the very information collected, and the resources put into it, are part of what their social science should be analysing.

Take a matter of particular interest to us female agents, housework. This is a big part of reality. Although it is usu-

ally unpaid, insurance companies estimate the value of work in the home for life assurance purposes at around £20,000 a year. Yet there are no economic statistics on the amount of housework carried out in the UK. Economists do not incorporate it in their theories of labour supply or consumer spending, although it plays a part in wives' - and husbands' - decisions whether to work and for how many hours, and in family income and spending.

The UK's admirable Office for National Statistics is starting work on collecting data on how people use their time, which will include housework. But this is an innovation certainly not driven by the economic profession.

The final implication of Dr Lawson's criticism is that economics uses the wrong methodology. Thinking of economic phenomena as the result of individual actions by atomistic agents, researchers focus on questions like: what underlying factors explain the growth and distribution of incomes over time? They might assemble data on incomes, educational qualifications, national GDP growth and so on. But the more interesting question might be: why are the incomes of the skilled rising relative to the unskilled? Or, perhaps, why do men earn more than women on average?

There is a parallel with biology, where the interesting question is not why one type of corn has a yield of so much, but why it is greater than a different breed's yield.

Mainstream economists are wedded to their methodology, feeling that to accept that economic outcomes depend on gender or culture or the path of

history would undermine the subject's authority. And I think economists are right to argue that their approach does give the subject an intellectual discipline and respect for facts that is not as widespread in the "soft" social sciences. But more and more practitioners, including most of the minority of women, believe that without a wider acceptance of the place of history and culture, the profession is digging its own grave.

It is clear, for example, that national economic performance depends on what the US academic Robert Putnam has called social capital - on having a stable legal framework and trusted institutions. This is why, according to his study, southern Italy has performed so much worse than the north despite receiving bucketloads of subsidy. It is why aid to developing countries has such a mixed record. It might help explain the UK's comparative economic decline. Economists consign its study to the sociologists, but in doing so undermine their own ability to explain.

In a damning paper in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* in 1987, David Colander and Arjo Klamer reported an analysis of the process of educating and training economists in US universities. Most graduates, they found, had chosen the subject because they were interested in matters of public policy and wanted to understand economic phenomena. The authors reported: "Graduate economics education is succeeding in narrowing students' interests."

Perhaps the birth of feminist economics and the profession's new women's committee marks the beginning of the end for the subject's reliance on analysing the "rational economic agent". The male diehards will no doubt mutter that irrationality is just typical of women.

\* *Economics and Reality*, Routledge, £16.99.

# Football team may have met its match in the City

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Sheffield United has challenged the press, analysts and institutions to a football match. The club threw down the gauntlet when it announced its interim results earlier this month, and the showdown is set for Thursday 17 April. One of my colleagues will play, while the list for the Sheffield team should be completed by the end of the week.

The match is being organised by City spin doctor Brunswick, which says it wants to see which journalists and City types dare to play before finalising the Sheffield line-up. Whether Sheffield's manager, Howard Kendall, will agree to subject first team players such as Mitch Ward and Dane Whitcomb to the rough and tumble of the City's hard tackling remains to be seen.

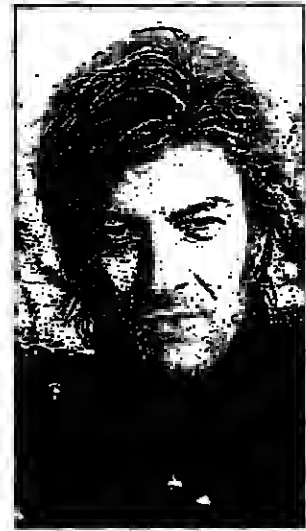
Perhaps they could invite actor Sean Bean, United's number one fan, or recall Seventies midfield maestro Tony Currie out of retirement. Watch this space.

Regular readers will know that Sam Jaffa is leaving the BBC after 16 years to become head of pr at Price Waterhouse.

Mr Jaffa was celebrating his last hours at the Beeb on Tuesday night with chums in a wine bar at the back of Broadcasting House. So overcame Mr Jaffa that he failed to notice TV hell-raiser Chris Evans and two pals taking advantage of Mr Jaffa's free bar.

Mr Evans, sporting a bizarre red, white and blue hat, helped himself to free bottles of Beck's before disappearing into an alcove to cram himself with tortilla chips. Mr Jaffa's pals were relieved to see, however, that Mr Evans later paid for the drinks.

No sooner has John Craven retired as chairman of Mor-



Sheffield United's number one fan: Actor Sean Bean

gan Grenfell than that nemesis of MG's asset management arm, Nicola Horlick, pops up on a "fantasy investment game" at the BBC World Service this weekend. Those in the know expect Mr Horlick to forecast a 2,000-point correction for the Dow and to recommend putting all your cash into Japan and Taiwan. I am assured that Nicola Bank will not be discussed.

When CGA Group, a home and car insurance company, went bust last week not many people realised its historical connection with the Country Gentlemen's Association. Happily, the apple-cheeked landed gentry who form the association's membership will not be affected by the receivership, since CGA, which grew up as the insurance arm of the association, parted company many years ago.

Churchill Insurance was happy to snap up CGA's 100,000 policies this week from the receivers Ernst & Young for a reputed pittance. The association, meanwhile, steams along after 100 years of glorious history. The asso-

ciation is based in Baldock, Hertfordshire, but was founded in Leitchworth. It was set up as the wealthy farmer's equivalent of the Co-op, when some clever toff realised it would be far cheaper for him and his chums to team together to buy five-bar gates, water troughs and the like, than to buy such items individually. Soon the association was selling stuff on and built a warehouse in Leitchworth. It is now mainly a membership association with a monthly magazine and the Leitchworth head office is a bousing estate. But the association enjoys better health than its offspring CGA.

Robbie Hardy, construction analyst at Panmure Gordon, is keen to put the record straight about last Friday's story in this column that calls to his number were met by a rendition of the French folk song *Frère Jacques*, with no beep for a message.

"I was with my wife who was having a baby," says Mr Hardy. Sounds like an impeccable reason to call. The result was a daughter, Isabel. Mr Hardy returned to work on Monday to find 15 rather long messages on his answerphone.

Mr Hardy didn't even know it played *Frère Jacques* until the article appeared: "It's just a standard BT answerphone."

Undeterred by its £77m mispricing blunder, Martin Owen's NatWest Markets continues its quest for global domination with three new European hires.

In come Geert Jan A. Leest, 37, from MeesPierson NV, William Pavone, 36, from Barclays de Zoete Wedd, and Robert Wall, 37, from Stanska AB.

John Willcock

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	1.6088	7.5	25.22	1000	1000
Canada	2.2358	0.46	10.92	1370	29.28
Germany	2.2728	70.63	207.86	18822	33.31
France	9.2628	282.21	675.64	107.61	99.96
Italy	27.83	71.83	189.83	263.83	332.83
Japan	201.88	98.95	285.83	124.0	57.55
Spain	169.0	24.30	72.58	148.8	10.84
Netherlands	3.6088	5.81	16.53	34.89	20.77
Denmark	10.488	250.80	710.80	645.81	98.73
Belgium	3.6088	5.81	16.53	34.89	20.77
Sweden	10.488	250.80	710.80	645.81	98.73
Switzerland	2.2728	70.63	207.86	18822	33.31
Australia	2.2728	70.63	207.86	18822	33.31
New Zealand	2.2728	70.63	207.86	18822	33.31
South Africa	6.0102	0.0	0.0	37.06	1.4
Singapore	2.2621	0.0	0.0	14.50	24.9

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	12970	0.9899			
Australia	1.6088				
Canada	2.2358				
China	8.2656				
Denmark	10.488				
France	9.2628				
Germany	2.2728				
Italy	27.83				
Japan	201.88				
Netherlands	3.6088				
Sweden	10.488				
Switzerland	2.2728				
South Africa	6.0102				
Singapore	2.2621				

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; subtract from spot rate.  
Dollar rates quoted as high are at a premium; add to spot rate.  
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0800 123 3033.  
Calls cost 50p per minute.

## Interest Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	6.00%				
Germany	5.50%				
France	5.50%				
Italy	7.50%				
Japan	5.50%				
Canada	5.50%				
US	5.50%				

## Bond Yields

Country	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year
UK	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%	7.8%	8.0%
Germany	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%	6.8%	7.0%
France	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%	6.8%	7.0%
Italy	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%	7.8%	8.0%
Japan	5.5%	5.8%	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%
Canada	5.5%	5.8%	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%
US	5.5%	5.8%	6.0%	6.3%	6.5%

## Money Market Rates

Country	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	6.0%			
Germany	5.5%			
France	5.5%			
Italy	7.5%			
Japan	5.5%			
Canada	5.5%			
US	5.5%			

## Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Australia	2.2728				
Canada	2.2358				
China	8.2656				
Denmark	10.488				
France	9.2628				
Germany	2.2728				
Italy	27.83				
Japan	201.88				
Netherlands	3.6088				
Sweden	10.488				
Switzerland	2.2728				
South Africa	6.0102				
Singapore	2.2621				

## Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Change
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02
ABN AMRO	1.25	+0.02

## Commodity Futures

Commodity	Price	Change
Oil	25.50	+0.10
Gold	380.00	+5.00
Silver	16.50	+0.05
Copper	1.50	+0.02
Aluminum	0.80	+0.01
Zinc	0.60	+0.01
Nickel	0.40	+0.01
Lead	0.30	+0.01
Platinum	1.20	+0.02
Palladium	1.50	+0.03

## Energy

Energy	Price	Change
Oil	25.50	+0.10
Gas	1.50	+0.02
Coal	0.80	+0.01
Electricity	0.10	+0.01
Natural Gas	0.50	+0.01
Heating Oil	0.40	+0.01
Propane	0.30	+0.01
Butane	0.20	+0.01
Petroleum	0.10	+0.01
Crude Oil	0.05	+0.01

## Commodity Indices

Commodity Index	Price	Change
Oil	25.50	+0.10
Gold	380.00	+5.00
Silver	16.50	+0.05
Copper	1.50	+0.02
Aluminum	0.80	+0.01
Zinc	0.60	+0.01
Nickel	0.40	+0.01
Lead	0.30	+0.01
Platinum	1.20	+0.02
Palladium	1.50	+0.03

## Industrial Metals

Industrial Metal	Price	Change
Aluminum	0.80	+0.01
Copper	1.50	+0.02
Gold	380.00	+5.00
Iron	0.10	+0.01
Nickel	0.40	+0.01
Palladium	1.50	+0.03
Platinum	1.20	+0.02
Silver	16.50	+0.05
Steel	0.05	+0.01
Tin	0.20	+0.01
Zinc	0.60	+0.01

## Precious Metals

Precious Metal	Price	Change
Gold	380.00	+5.00
Silver	16.50	+0.05
Palladium	1.50	+0.03
Platinum	1.20	+0.02
Rhodium	0.50	+0.01
Rosetta	0.10	+0.01
Vanadium	0.05	+0.01
Yttrium	0.02	+0.01
Zirconium	0.01	+0.01
Antimony	0.005	+0.01
Barium	0.002	+0.01

## Agricultural

Agricultural	Price	Change
Wheat	1.50	+0.02
Barley	1.20	+0.01
Oats	1.00	+0.01
Rye	0.80	+0.01
Sorghum	0.60	+0.01
Millet	0.50	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.40	+0.01
Amaranth	0.30	+0.01
Quinoa	0.20	+0.01
Amaranth	0.10	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.05	+0.01
Amaranth	0.02	+0.01
Quinoa	0.01	+0.01

## Other Softs

Other Soft	Price	Change
Wheat	1.50	+0.02
Barley	1.20	+0.01
Oats	1.00	+0.01
Rye	0.80	+0.01
Sorghum	0.60	+0.01
Millet	0.50	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.40	+0.01
Amaranth	0.30	+0.01
Quinoa	0.20	+0.01
Amaranth	0.10	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.05	+0.01
Amaranth	0.02	+0.01
Quinoa	0.01	+0.01

## Other Softs

Other Soft	Price	Change
Wheat	1.50	+0.02
Barley	1.20	+0.01
Oats	1.00	+0.01
Rye	0.80	+0.01
Sorghum	0.60	+0.01
Millet	0.50	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.40	+0.01
Amaranth	0.30	+0.01
Quinoa	0.20	+0.01
Amaranth	0.10	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.05	+0.01
Amaranth	0.02	+0.01
Quinoa	0.01	+0.01

## Other Softs

Other Soft	Price	Change
Wheat	1.50	+0.02
Barley	1.20	+0.01
Oats	1.00	+0.01
Rye	0.80	+0.01
Sorghum	0.60	+0.01
Millet	0.50	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.40	+0.01
Amaranth	0.30	+0.01
Quinoa	0.20	+0.01
Amaranth	0.10	+0.01
Buckwheat	0.05	+0.01



# Thoroughbreds shaded by clouds and camels

## Racing

GREG WOOD reports from Dubai

When you see a lake in the desert it can generally be written off as a mirage, but there was nothing ethereal about the huge puddles around the Nad Al Sheba race-track here yesterday morning. The previous evening's rain had also summoned up a thunderstorm of biblical proportions which raged throughout the night, depositing so much water on this normally bone-dry city that some started to question whether Saturday's Dubai World Cup might succumb to the elements.

A little alarmist, perhaps, but the managers at Nad Al Sheba were sufficiently concerned by the state of the dirt course to place it off-limits for morning exercise. Exercise gallops took place instead on the light turf circuit inside the dirt track, with the European runners Singpiel and Hellsio among those cantering at a gentle half-pace.

The dirt course which will - we hope - stage Saturday's 10-furlong event is chemically sealed, which provides a measure of resistance to rain. No one, however, could have planned for a storm of such magnitude - standing on one side of a modest Dubai street, it was all but impossible to see the other through the descending waterfall - and several trainers were peering gloomily at the results yesterday.

"Out by the two-furlong pole it's very deep," Mark Tompkins, who will saddle Even Top on Saturday night, said. "The kick-back will be bad, great dollops of it." Another with evident concerns was Takao Nakano, the chain-smoking 56-year-old Japanese trainer of Hokuto Vega, the mare who will take a 10-race winning streak into Saturday's race. "She's the top dirt horse in Japan," Nakano said, "but I'm worried about the track getting sloppy because we race on a much firmer surface at home. Because of that we decided not to send her out today."

Another downpour like Tuesday's on the night before the

race would almost certainly mean cancellation, and when the latest weather forecast from air-traffic control included a severe weather warning, at least one member of the Cup Committee was musing about the possibility of postponement. His conclusion was that the logistics of bringing horses, connections and media to Dubai from six countries are such that a postponement of even 24 hours might well be impractical. It was only a little later, when the warning was rescinded, that the anxiety began to wane.

Few trainers are more aware of the course's idiosyncrasies than Kiaran McLaughlin, Dubai's champion trainer for the last two seasons, who will saddle Key Of Luck in the big race this weekend. "This track doesn't handle the rain quite as well as you would like," McLaughlin says, "but if there's no more it will be fine."

The American, a former assistant to D Wayne Lukas, is an important figure in Sheikh Hamdan's bloodstock operation, and has spent the winter taking care of some of the most

promising of the owner's three-year-olds, Shaya and Sarayir, who may be targeted at the Derby and Oaks respectively, are two to look out for after their imminent return to Dick Hern's stable, while Khassah, a potential 1,000 Guineas filly, will be returning to John Gosden. In time, McLaughlin expects many more of Sheikh Hamdan's horses to winter in Dubai, in an attempt to match the enormous success of the Godolphin operation set up by his brother, Sheikh Mohammed.

Both brothers saw their colours carried into the frame in yesterday's big race here, but the jockeys were far smaller than Pat Eddery or Frankie Dettori (or even Willie Carson), and their mounts are unlikely to be appearing at the Craven meeting. The Rulers' Cup, the country's most prestigious camel race, was won by an animal from Qatar, but since no-one seemed to know its name, and betting is strictly forbidden, it is fair to say that the spectacle was more important than the result.

The Cup was run - perhaps



The winner is clear of the pursuing pack in the big race at Nad Al Sheba yesterday. Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

truth - over a single circuit of Nad Al Sheba's camel track, but since the course is seven miles round, and camels are not quite so fleet of foot as thoroughbreds, the spectators had plenty of time to ponder such nagging questions as where, precisely, the field was.

The distant glint of metal from its accompanying motorcade offered the only, occasional clue, though it was quickly clear from the closed-circuit television that the pride of Qatar was going ominously well in front. The form book comment would have read "soon led, stayed on well from six miles out", and the constant

attention of the child on his back (the jockeys are aged between seven and 11) ensured that he would not be slipping up the long - incredibly long - home straight. If Nad Al Sheba's stewards employed the British "six bit" rule, every runner would have been disqualified within the first 100 yards.

This is a race for honour, not money, and the dubious reward for the winning camel was to have his head and neck doused with essence of saffron. For the next month or two this will prove to anyone who meets him that he is the fastest camel in the country. Not to mention the one with the strangest hairdo.

## Club may go for the doctor after McCoy case

The Jockey Club may seek to provide its own medical staff at racecourses in the wake of the Tony McCoy incident. Tracks make their own arrangements with local medical practitioners, as was the case with Uttoxeter and Dr Andrew Toman, who erroneously signed McCoy off for 10 days, increased to 21 by the Club's chief medical officer Dr Michael Turner on Monday, after a full eight days ago.

A review of safety procedures and instructions at courses was

commenced by Turner last summer. "The difficulty is that if you have qualified people with clear instructions, it is reasonable to expect them to carry out those instructions, and the instructions in this case were perfectly clear," David Pipe, head of Jockey Club public affairs, said.

"Michael Turner is compiling his report and making consultations, and there are a number of options, including the provision of doctors at courses by the Jockey Club. It has considerable

financial implications, but it is a possibility."

Reports from the Uttoxeter clerk of the course, David McAllister, and Turner dealing with the McCoy incident are also expected by Tony Goodhue, the Club's director of racecourse services, within the next fortnight.

Dave Roberts, the McCoy's agent, has offered his co-operation to ensure a similar situation to McCoy's does not arise again. "The main thing is that

the whole thing is not swept under the carpet," Roberts said. "It is a serious mistake and it is no good saying everyone's sorry and then allowing the whole thing to be forgotten about."

"We don't want someone's head and we don't want blood. We just want the Jockey Club to do something to make sure this kind of thing doesn't happen again. Nobody is invincible and everybody makes mistakes. Someone at the Jockey Club has made a risk, and that happens."

## Punters jump on Band wagon

Sunny Bay, Smiths Band and Time For A Run were the horses supported yesterday for the Grand National on Saturday week, while Chris Maude has been engaged to ride Dextra Dove.

With Richard Dunwoody booked to ride Smiths Band for Jenny Pitman and Jamie Osborne linking up with Sunny Bay, punters had an incentive to support that pair. Sunny Bay is now 10-1, from 14-1, while Ladbrokes, while Smiths Band

is 16-1, from 25-1, with the same firm, J.P. McManus's Time For A Run, already backed with big money, has been cut to 12-1, from 16-1, by Coral. The firm took one bet of £1,000 at 16-1. Simon Earle snapped up Chris Maude's services for Dextra Dove after being delighted with the 10-year-old since he put up a lifeless display in the Racing Post Chase at Kempton last month.

"He's come back from some physio on his shoulders and

## RESULTS

**ASCOT**  
2.00: 1. SYMPHONY'S SON (P) Johnson 12-1; 2. Ivory Coast 15-1; 3. Disabled 10-3; 4. 20 m. 5-2 fav. The Flying Phantom. 11. 1. D. Henderson, Temple Gaining, Total: £15,600; 2. 20 m. 5-2 fav. The Flying Phantom. 11. 1. D. Henderson, Temple Gaining, Total: £15,600; 3. 20 m. 5-2 fav. The Flying Phantom. 11. 1. D. Henderson, Temple Gaining, Total: £15,600; 4. 20 m. 5-2 fav. The Flying Phantom. 11. 1. D. Henderson, Temple Gaining, Total: £15,600.

HYPERION	
2.10 Moonshiner	4.10 Zaima
2.40 Northern Fan	4.40 Broughtons Turmoil
3.10 Prince Danzig	5.10 Dust Dance
3.40 Zidac (nb)	

**GOING:** Good to Firm (Good in places).  
**STALLS:** Stable. DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low from 54 to 1m.  
**RIGHT-LEAD:** (including country) with a clear lead.  
**COURSE:** In 2m SE of city off 400, Leicester station (London, St. Pancras - Sheffield line).  
**DRUGS:** One or two (see 1000) (see 1000).  
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sport

# To arrange a friendly at this time leaves Hoddle and his employers at the Football Association open to a charge of loose thinking

One of the toasts at a football dinner I used to attend annually honours people present who have turned out in the colours of their country. Envy always came over me. Just once, I would think. Just once. Deficiency in the limb department precludes the glib assertion that an international cap is something I would have gladly given my right arm for, but when people say this I know exactly what they are going on about. Long before going into the professional game, and learning about its disappointments, playing for Wales was the pinnacle of my ambition.

That thought, and it is pretty threadbare now, springs to mind because of the difficulties Glenn Hoddle has encountered in trying to assemble a team for Saturday's

friendly between England and Mexico at Wembley.

As reported by my colleague Glenn Moore on these pages yesterday, of Hoddle's original 25-man squad, five withdrew with injuries and eight others are doubtful. Even allowing for World Cup engagements involving the other home countries, to arrange a friendly at this time, one of intense activity in the Premiership, leaves Hoddle and his employers at the Football Association open to a charge of loose thinking.

Inevitably, it rekindled the old club versus country argument, putting an unnecessary strain on relations between Hoddle and the club managers who feel their players are being denied a rare opportunity for rest and rehabilitation. How the

players themselves feel about this is quite a different matter.

There are now all sorts of rules to ensure that countries can send out their strongest team for competitive matches, preventing the sort of ridiculous situation that grew up in 1958 when Juventus were at first reluctant to release the great Welsh forward John Charles for the World Cup finals in Sweden. Charles' comparatively meagre total of 38 caps is explained by the pressure imposed on him, "I always wanted to play for Wales," he told me recently, "but Juventus knew that I was always a target for defenders and didn't want me injured. It caused plenty of arguments between us."

When a victory over Italy in Naples would have qualified Scotland for the 1966 World Cup finals



KEN JONES

they were denied the services of important players from Liverpool, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur and went out of the competition. Two of the managers involved, Matt Busby and Bill Shankly, were Scots.

tween the four home countries and the League programme once caused the Tottenham manager, Bill Nicholson to withdraw Dave Mackay, John White and Bill Brown from the Scotland team to play England at Hampden Park. "I could understand Bill's decision," Mackay said, "but it was very disappointing. Playing for Scotland was very important to us." A big difference now is the proliferation of international fixtures. No sooner have countries finished with one competition than they are into another. Friendly matches may be important to development and collective understanding but they aggravate the suppliers.

Often, they create a dilemma for the players. In some cases, and there is no doubt in my mind about

this, they are persuaded to feign injury. When international matches were rather more important than they are today, clubs bribed their men with compensation. Not so long ago, just a couple of years in fact, I found myself in the company of two players who had been pulled out of an international match in Eastern Europe which, you can be sure, they would not have visited with any great enthusiasm. Apart from anything else, there would not have been much to unload their loot on. At some stage of proceedings one turned to the other, smiled, raised his glass and said: "Just think we could have been stuck out there tonight, getting kicked and running our bollocks off. Cheers!"

The remark did not strike me as funny or in any way endearing. The record book I turned to later suggested better values. One of Arsenal's most brilliant players, Alex James, turned out only five times for Scotland. Another of their Scottish heroes, Jimmy Logie, gained just one cap. Just 16 caps for Dixie Dean, who scored 60 goals for Everton in one season.

There are so many international matches now that most of the players you come across in the Premiership seem to have turned out internationally in some form or another. Maybe I am wrong about this, but it does seem that the experience has become a great deal less of a high prize in the distance. They should count themselves lucky.

## Year of goodbyes and bad buys

Transfer-deadline day, an institution which often appears to have been preserved to allow John Burridge and Clive Allen to see more of the country, is upon us. The passing of the 5pm cut-off point may only briefly stop the speculation, but for many managers it means the rest of the season becomes a matter of make do or die.

In the 12 months since the fixtures confirming changes in registration spluttered to a halt, well over £200m has been lavished on players by Premiership and Football League clubs. A staggering £118m was spent in the summer, a record close-season total that was swollen by Newcastle's £15m swoop for Alan Shearer.

While the size of the cheque to Blackburn artificially distorts the figures, the continuing trend towards a concentration of wealth in the Premiership is evident. During the summer of 1996, for example, clubs from the old First Division accounted for only 55 per cent of the £29m that changed hands. In the build-up to the current season they splashed £98m, nearly 85 per cent of the total outlay.

As the campaign has progressed, spending levels have remained surprisingly unaffected by the Bosman ruling. Only a handful of clubs have exploited the freedom it conferred on out-of-contract Continentals.

Of them, Norway's Bjorn Tore Kvarme could claim to be the most striking success. For nothing more than a signing-on fee, Liverpool acquired an excellent young defender who had Champions' League experience with Rosenborg Trondheim and would have commanded £2.5m on the open market.

The FA Cup offers another post-Bosman signing, Gianluca Vialli, the chance to redeem a patchy sojourn at Chelsea.

**Phil Shaw looks at English football's bargain signings and costly mistakes - 12 months and £200m on from last year's transfer-deadline day**

but Gianfranco Zola's £4.5m move from Parma already looks better business than Vialli's "free" from Juventus.

In my view Zola has three rivals for the distinction of being the season's outstanding buy. One is Nigel Martyn, who has forced his way back into contention for the England keeper's jersey since Leeds priced him from Crystal Palace for £2.25m. Another must be Patrik Vieira, a fringe player at Milan who has become a key figure at Arsenal after a £3.5m switch.

Pound for pound, though, the title must go to Kvarme's equally unheralded compatriot, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who has emerged as if from nowhere to become Manchester United's top scorer. The boyish striker earned FC Møldre all of £1.5m - or a 10th of what Newcastle shelled out for Shearer - and has 13 goals to show for his 21 League starts.

Which is just as well, since another of Alex Ferguson's foreign captures, Jordi Cruyff (£1.4m from Barcelona), ranks among the less judicious transactions. And the politest that can be said of Karel Poborsky (£3.5m from Slavia Prague) is that the jury is still out.

Lee Sharpe, on whom Howard Wilkinson gaudied a Thomas Brabin-sized £4.5m of Leeds' money, has yet to prove his worth. To be fair, he joined a team in transition - from dire to dour - and one suspects many Old Trafford patrons would take him back in exchange for Cruyff and Poborsky.

The Czech, in turn, has been a storming success compared

with Sasa Curcic, hugely talented but a moaning misfit since defecting from Bolton to Aston Villa for £4m; or Ramon Vega, the Swiss stopper who set Spurs back £3.75m only to spend much of the time suspended or injured; and Romania's Florin Raducioiu, on whom West Ham swallowed an £800,000 loss when he retreated to Espanyol four months after arriving for £2.4m.

Yet the worst buy of 1996-97 - I refuse to say arguably - has been an Englishman. As claimed by the new Peter Beardsley or the next Teddy Sheringham, Nick Barmby's form was already fading at Middlesbrough and has dipped disastrously since Joe Royle paid £5.75m to make him Everton's most expensive player.

Royle did offload Andrei Kanchelskis to Italy for a profit of £3.5m, but Barmby's lack of impact has led some Evertonians to view the Ukrainian's uneven contribution more favourably.

As for Shearer, he hardly let Newcastle down before succumbing to injury. The coup was, however, supposed to turn last year's near miss into a championship. Judged on that criterion, the expenditure has yet to be justified.

By the same logic, the mind-boggling £7m Middlesbrough paid for Fabrizio Ravacelli will not seem like a ship should the "White Feather" score the winner in or more final.

It has not been all multi-million pound deals. Martin O'Neill has bought half a team for less than the Barmby fee and led Leicester to a Wembley final and Premiership



Norway's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has emerged as the bargain of the season at Old Trafford. Photograph: Emptics

respectability. Coventry acquired Darren Huckerby from Newcastle for a giveaway £1m and could probably quadruple their money today.

At the opposite end of the age scale, John Sheridan and John Hendrie cost Bolton and

Barnsley a mere £180,000 and £250,000 respectively. Each has played a massive part in his club's push for Premiership status.

Meanwhile, one Third Division club have shown Newcastle how to speculate in order to

accumulate. Wigan also set a club record for a striker last season, venturing £150,000 on Doncaster's Graeme Jones. The Yorkshireman now leads Fowler, Ravacelli and the rest, with a Shearersque 31 goals, and promotion beckons.



David May: "You get to know your real friends when things are going badly"

become the new sound of Old Trafford. It has also been heard a few times on the team bus. May, though not one to seek the spotlight, is clearly tickled by this recognition. "It puts a smile on my face. The team take the mic but it's all a bit of banter," he said.

So far the medal count is 4-1 in May's favour, by the end of this season he could be even further ahead.

## Dark days are over as May shines

When David May was omitted from the original England squad for Saturday's Wembley friendly with Mexico, he could have been forgiven for wondering if he would ever get in. May was in the best form of his career and there were more centre-halves injured or doubtful than even George Graham could find to use from him.

The example of Steve Bruce, May's predecessor in the Manchester United team, loomed. Bruce was one of the key figures in United's 1996 revival but he came no closer to England recognition than a belated admission by Bobby Robson that he should have capped him and one by Graham Taylor that he was unlucky not to have won 20 to 30 caps.

May is still to actually play for England - but the 26-year-old has at least made the squad, after being called up on Sunday as the injury toll rose. "A lot of

people have been saying it is about time I was called up," May said at England's Bisham Abbey training camp yesterday. "I was just concentrating on doing well for Manchester United. I knew if I did that the chance would come."

"It is remarkable that Bruce was never called up for England given what he has done for United. It was unfortunate for him."

May, however, is used to waiting for his chance. It took him two years to dislodge Bruce in the United team after signing in the summer of 1994. In that time he saw his old team win the Premiership and himself pilloried for a series of poor performances when played out of position at right-back.

Already softly spoken, May's voice dropped and his body language grew defensive as he recalled those times. "I never

**The Manchester United defender is delighted with his England call, he tells Glenn Moore**

regretted the move. I never doubted my ability, but it was a difficult period. I was not happy with my form and I felt a bit overawed. I'd come from Blackburn, which is not as big as United.

"At right-back I was a fish out of water but it was a learning experience. It showed to myself what sort of character I was and what type of friends I have got. You get to know your real friends when things are going badly for you and my friends and my family stood by me."

"My family said 'don't worry, you'll pull through it'. The other players were brilliant and so was the manager. That's the

type of club it is, everybody rallies around you. "Now I'm back at centre-half I'm enjoying it more than ever. I prefer centre-back, I've played there all my career."

Even in the dark days there were indications of the player he could be. The turning point was in late November 1994. Three days after being substituted during United's ignominious defeat in Gothenburg - after having a nightmare at right-back - May replaced the suspended Bruce at centre-back at Highbury. In a goalless draw he was solid and accomplished: a point had been made.

With Bruce outstanding further chances were rare but, by the end of last season, May was in the team, scoring the opening goal in the championship debut at Middlesbrough, and keeping his place for the FA Cup final. This year United's European challenge has

brought the best out of him. The Porto tie - when he continued his track of scoring key goals in the first leg, and then made that tackle on Jardel in the second - brought him to prominence, but he had been playing well for some time.

"It's a different game in Europe. I feel comfortable in it. It's a lot slower. You have to be patient, there's a lot more build up, but when the ball gets in the box it is quick. You have to be aware of everything around you."

"Europe has brought the best out of him," Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, said. "It always was the stepping stone for international football and it's brought him on no end. He's also enjoyed being at an exceptional club."

The fans have noticed his improvement. The chant "David May, Superstar: He's won more medals than Shearer" has



David May: "You get to know your real friends when things are going badly"

become the new sound of Old Trafford. It has also been heard a few times on the team bus. May, though not one to seek the spotlight, is clearly tickled by this recognition. "It puts a smile on my face. The team take the mic but it's all a bit of banter," he said.

So far the medal count is 4-1 in May's favour, by the end of this season he could be even further ahead.

## Giggs answers his Welsh critics

Wales will be able to unleash a fully-fit Ryan Giggs against Belgium in the World Cup qualifying match on Saturday - because of the rest Alex Ferguson gave him.

The Manchester United winger came in for severe criticism from some Wales supporters when he pulled out of last month's friendly against the Republic of Ireland, but Giggs insisted yesterday that he owes his current form and fitness to the fortnight's break he had either side of the Irish game.

"It's tough for Alex Ferguson because he's got to look after his 'overs," said Giggs. "I had a little nagging hamstring before the

Ireland game and he thought I needed a rest. It meant I had a full two weeks to recover from it and it did me good. The criticism I got for missing the game hurt, because, as I've said many times, I love playing for Wales."

The Welsh manager, Bobby Gould, is hoping Mark Hughes will overcome a groin strain and join Giggs in the line-up against the Belgians in a game that both sides badly need to win to boost their hopes of claiming second place behind the likely group winners, the Netherlands.

Hughes had a couple of days' treatment at Stamford Bridge before joining up with Wales and is ready to test the injury in training

today. If Hughes is ruled out, Gould will perm two strikers from Dean Saunders, John Hartson and Nathan Blake.

Scotland have granted John Spencer permission to play for Queen's Park Rangers on Saturday. The manager, Craig Brown, announced the decision yesterday despite the fact he is expecting the Rangers pair, Ian Ferguson and Alan McLauren, to withdraw from the squad which faces Estonia at Kilmarnock at Celtic Park next Wednesday. "It is not a dangerous precedent. It simply shows clubs that we are not inflexible," Brown said.

## McStay poised to leave Celtic

The 16-year association between Paul McStay and Celtic could be coming to an end after the Parkhead captain yesterday revealed he has not been made a contract offer with his current deal due to expire this summer.

"I wouldn't say there is a rift but I have been informed that no contract will be offered between now and the end of the season," McStay said. Asked if the situation with Celtic could be resolved, McStay said: "All I can say is what I was told yesterday I can't go any further than that - there's no contract and that is it really."

On the prospect of leaving the club he loves, McStay added:

"That is something I have to contemplate. If I don't leave, I'll be on month to month deals. I've been told there is no offer so I have to weigh up my options and review my future. I've nothing at all in the pipeline."

Celtic's chairman, Fergus McCann, refused to discuss the future of McStay, other than to comment that he had expected discussions to "remain confidential". McCann also insisted that any offer of a new contract would not be made to the manager, Tommy Burns, until the summer. "The position of Tommy Burns will be discussed along with the entire direction of the development of the team

and the club at the end of the season," McCann said. Meanwhile Celtic's top scorer this season, Jorge Cadete, was told by McCann that he will only see an increase in his wages if he agreed a longer contract.

The Rangers left-back, David Robertson, has been offered a three-year deal by the Serie A team, Perugia. They are one of a number of Italian clubs, including Atalanta and Internazionale, interested in the defender, who will be out of contract this summer. Rangers, however, are still negotiating to keep the player who was signed from Aberdeen in 1991 for almost £1m.

## Mijnders masterminds Oxford revival

**Hugh Matheson meets the Dutch coach planning to win the Boat Race**

The Dark Blue coach, Rene Mijnders, is a little baffled that, as coach of the Dutch crew which won the 1996 Olympic title, his fame ripples little beyond the banks of the Amstel canal, where his crew had lived and trained and that now he is feted throughout England and has two or three television units following each of his training sessions.

Mijnders, 40, had been on the scene in the Netherlands for some years before he struck gold with the eight and the gradual build up, while his crew twice came second in the World Championships, disguised his impact, but here it is apparent for all to see.

Challenged on whether any of his Oxford crew could have taken a place in the Dutch Olympic eight he says, "This

main difference is that before it seemed as though Oxford worked on development of skills and physical development almost separately, and now the technical and strength development are integrated." To this end he has abandoned the hours spent on weights in the gym and devotes the time to quality training in the boat.

The stakes are up. They have all done headbanging work in other crews and some could not believe that their results might improve when outings were sometimes cut short if the quality was not high enough. But when they are tested on the unforgiving ergometer, the rowing machine which measures their power in every possible calibration, they achieve personal bests beyond what they previously thought possible.

He pays the closest attention to detail that others rarely notice. When you watch the stero of the pale yellow Empacher boat that Oxford are using, it runs forward all the time, with the barest hint of a check when all eight of the oarsmen catch the water with the blades and apply their coiled-up power to lever the hull forward.

Mijnders has worked on them to place the blade almost delicately in the water and increase the power in sympathy for the way the boat is running, and he has adjusted the mechanics of the boat and its gearing to deceive even experienced watchers on how fast the boat is going.

He creates a happy atmosphere but keeps himself a little separate when tricky selection decisions have to be taken - as this year when he told the president, "Ed Bellamy, that he would not make the crew."

When he is asked why someone would drop from winning in the Olympics to the parochial challenge of two foreign universities, he does not cite the usual glamour and traditions of the race but simply says, "They are comparable. You work with a team which starts as a group of athletes and you plan to work together to one goal. That one took four years, in this case we only have six months. That makes it interesting."

## Lola out for season

**Motor racing**

The Lola Grand Prix team have pulled out of Formula One after just one race. A team spokesman confirmed yesterday the Lola team's two cars will not compete in Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix or any of the other remaining 16 races this season.

"We got a telephone call yesterday from the factory telling us we were pulling out," Ray Boulter, the team manager, said in Sao Paulo yesterday afternoon. "We were, well, amazed. It is all the more surprising because the whole team is already here. We had come out especially early to prepare ourselves for this event. Everything is set up and ready to go."

Lola, based at Huntingdon, had 28 mechanics and engineers and two drivers, the Brazilians Ricardo Rosset and the Italian

Vincenzo Sospiri, preparing for qualifying, which starts tomorrow at the Interlagos circuit.

"The freight continues on to Argentina, so the future remains open," Boulter added. "But we will all be getting back to England as soon as we can."

A spokesman for the team in England said: "I can confirm that Lola have pulled out of the Brazilian Grand Prix and will not be entering other races in 1997. Beyond that, we are a racing car company and we have identified Formula One as an area we should be involved in."

Lola are one of the most distinguished names in the sport, having won championships at almost every level and dominated the IndyCar series. Grand Prix racing is the one Formula One they have never cracked. They have had one pole position - in 1992 - and just 40 points to show for 140 grands prix.









Riversiders: The crews of Cambridge (nearest) and Oxford take to the water yesterday in the final rehearsals for Saturday's Boat Race over the 4 1/4 mile course

# Appeal failure dismays Middlesbrough

Football  
TREVOR HAYLETT

Middlesbrough learned yesterday that they have the manager of the month and the player of the month, but not the legal argument to win the day. A Football Association appeal board threw out their protest against the three-point penalty imposed after they failed to fulfil a fixture with Blackburn Rovers.

barrister, who is reported to charge £10,000 a day, to argue that with 23 players either ill, injured or suspended they could not have put out a side at Ewood Park on 21 December. The club faxed that information to the Premier League 24 hours before the match, but did not contact Blackburn.

The game will now be played on 16 April and no restriction will be placed on either Blackburn or Middlesbrough with regard to the players they can select. Some clubs had argued that Middlesbrough should play with the seven first-choice players who were fit at the time.

bad put together four successive victories before Monday's draw with Nottingham Forest. They have also fought their way to the Coca-Cola Cup final and FA Cup semi-finals.

about the result of the appeal, Robson said. The board comprised Geoffrey Thompson, chairman of the FA's disciplinary committee, Barry Bright, the committee's vice chairman, and Frank Pattison of the Durham FA. It heard argument from Blackburn that they should be given the game, but decided that was neither practical nor appropriate. It also ordered Middlesbrough to pay the costs of both the Premier League and the appeal board.

good football," Simon Bolton, the Middlesbrough supporters' club secretary, said. "Neither the fans, nor the players had done anything wrong. A fine would have been sufficient."



Bryan Robson after yesterday's verdict

## Dalglish spends £2.5m on Hamilton

ALAN NIXON

Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle United manager, is spending £2.5m on the 30-year-old Bradford City player, Des Hamilton. The right-sided wing back is Dalglish's first major signing for the Tynesiders.

go straight into Dalglish's side. Hamilton's agent was finalising terms on Tyneside yesterday, but there should be no last-minute problems to block the deadline-day transfer.

Swedish midfielder Jan Jansson and the Notts County right-back Chris Wilder.

winger Peter Beagrie, is wanted by promotion-chasing Burnley on loan for the rest of the season.

the season. Woods played for Southampton earlier in the campaign but broke a leg after a four-month loan spell, playing only six matches.

## Portugal's coach felled by irate player

Glenn Hoddle may think he has problems as he prepares for Saturday's international against Mexico - but at least the England coach has not had to suffer the indignity of his Portuguese counterpart, who was felled yesterday by a player angered by his exclusion from the national squad.

## Royle's double deal

Everton plan to complete the surprise double signing of two Norwegians, Tore Andre Flo and Claus Eftevaag, in a £3m deal today, writes Alan Nixon.

more of a surprise. The right-sided defender can play at full-back or centre-half but has a bad back. He had to limp out of Brann's European Cup-Winners' Cup defeat by Liverpool last week when his coach described him as "an old man".

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3257, Thursday 27 March

3x Mass

Tuesday's Solution

ACROSS

1 Trouble making tricks? ... (8)

6 ... Better bridge player gets the point (4)

9 Second, second in a race - just (2,4)

10 Hint from Member voiced in German (7)

11 Marine creature washed up ashore in Kent? (8)

12 Box lug, clip one (6)

13 Rainfall saga ruined honeymoon venue (7,5)

16 Got fired? On the contrary (12)

19 Fundamental origin of Triassic rock (6)

20 Consumers' Association? (8)

DOWN

2 One forward in row's up-caded in game (8)

3 i.e., group embraced by church (5)

4 Make painter re-tint to cover old gloss (14)

5 Tree structure's good, planted in March with a touch of fertiliser? (3,4)

6 Party forces out in groups (9)

7 Fellow salesman set up drink (6)

8 Figure out? (14)

14 Endlessly gloomy depths engulfing English soldier (9)

15 Curried mince, Pam's Indian food (8)

17 It's enough to get one down (7)

18 Sheet of holy writ absorbed by chap (6)

21 Like the drink? (5)

## Brain scans for boxers

Boxing

All professional boxers in Britain will have to undergo an annual brain scan before they are allowed to fight, the British Boxing Board of Control announced yesterday.

bantamweight James Murray after his British title fight with Drew Docherty in October 1995.

amateur boxing's ruling body, has also been approached. "I hope we will come up with a formula to make it work," he said.

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